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# THE SCIENCE OF ETHICS

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# SCIENCE OF ETHICS

BY

LESLIE STEPHEN

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# PREFACE

A PREFACE is generally the most interesting, and not seldom the only interesting, part of a book. It is useful to the hasty critic who wishes to avoid the trouble of reading at all, and to the more serious student who wishes to have the clue to the author's speculations put into his hands at the earliest possible period. I should be glad to be useful to both classes, to save some readers the trouble of getting through more than a couple of paragraphs, and to point out to others what is the kind of result which they may expect from a perusal of the whole work.

My ethical theory, then, when I first became the conscious proprietor of any theory at all, was that of the orthodox utilitarians. J. S. Mill was the Gamaliel at whose feet I sat, and whose authority was decisive with me on this as on other matters. In this, of course, I was simply following the example of the majority of the more thoughtful lads of my own generation. At a later period my mind was stirred by the great impulse conveyed through Mr. Darwin's *Origin of Species*. I shall always, I hope, be proud to acknowledge the great intellectual debt which I, in common with so many worthier disciples, owe to his writings.[1] So far as ethical problems were concerned, I at first regarded Mr. Darwin's principles rather as providing a new armoury wherewith to

[1] It is with a pang of deep regret that I must add to-day (April 24, 1882) that I can no longer cherish the hope of fully acknowledging it to Mr. Darwin himself. I was withheld from speaking formerly by the feeling that anything like a compliment (sincere though it might be) seemed incongruous in presence of that exquisitely simple and modest nature. Yet I could wish that I had been less diffident.

encounter certain plausible objections of the so-called Intrusionists, than as implying any reconstruction of the utilitarian doctrine itself. Gradually, however, I came to think that a deeper change would be necessary, and I believe that this conviction came to me from a study of some of Mr. Herbert Spencer's works. It became stronger during a subsequent attempt at a brief historical examination of the English moralists of the eighteenth century. Whilst I was finishing that task, I read Mr. Henry Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, then just published. As I differ upon many points from Mr. Sidgwick, and especially upon the critical point of the relation of evolution to ethics, I am the more bound to express my sincere admiration for this book. It set me thinking when it failed to make me think with him. The result of my thinking was a resolution to set down as systematically as I could a statement of the ethical theory which had commended itself to me. I resolved to begin at the beginning as well as I could, and trudge steadily through the alternate platitudes and subtleties into which every moralist must plunge. My views were, of course, more or less modified in the process, and though they have not substantially changed, I hope that they have gained in consistency and clearness. At any rate, my labours are embodied in the following pages, which may be briefly described as an attempt to lay down an ethical doctrine in harmony with the doctrine of evolution so widely accepted by modern men of science.

To this statement it would be desirable to add an acknowledgment of my debt to other writers. I find it impossible to do so, for the simple reason that I am altogether ignorant of the extent of my obligations. It has happened to me, as, I presume, to almost all writers upon such topics, to discover that arguments which had apparently sprung up spontaneously in my own mind had really been expressly stated by my predecessors, and, moreover, stated in books with which I had been familiar; and were, therefore, in all probability, intellectual waifs and strays upon which I had unconsciously laid hands. In less direct ways, I have, of course, been in-

fluenced to a degree which I am quite unable to estimate. I have no fear that my obligations to writers belonging to what I may call my own school, to Hume, Bentham, the Mills, G. H. Lewes, and Mr. Herbert Spencer, will be overlooked or underrated; and I would gladly name others to whom I am more opposed, were it not that in many cases an acknowledgment would look like a claim to affiliate my speculations upon men who would regard the claim as offensive. I can, however, obviate any objection which may be made to want of fuller acknowledgment by the explicit and perfectly sincere admission that I do not believe (though again I cannot be certain even of this negative statement) that there is a single original thought in the book from beginning to end. By original, I mean of course a thought which has not occurred to others; though I, of course, also claim to have made every thought which I utter my own by reflection and assimilation.

I am the more bound to make this statement because I have made it a rule never to mention proper names. I have done so partly because I think that any book which aims at scientific method should contain within itself all that is necessary to the immediate issues, and should avoid the appearance of anything like an appeal to authority; and still more because I have observed that, as a matter of fact, any such references are apt to introduce digressions, and to lead one aside into disputes as to the rightful interpretation or correct affiliation of the principles of other writers, which, however interesting, really involve irrelevant issues.

Another question may be suggested by this avowal. Why publish a fresh discussion of so ancient a topic if you have nothing new to say? The general answer is simple enough: namely, that problems of this kind require to be discussed in every generation with a change of dialect, if not with a corresponding change of the first principles; and, further, that it is desirable that all points of view should be represented. This last remark may suggest some answer to the more special question, whether my book has not been made superfluous by the discussion of the same topic upon the same

assumptions by the leading exponent of the philosophy of evolution in Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Data of Ethics*. To this I reply that I differ from Mr. Herbert Spencer in various ways; and moreover, that we really stand at different points of view. Mr. Spencer has worked out an encyclopædic system, of which his ethical system is the crown and completion. I, on the contrary, have started from the old ethical theories, and am trying to bring them into harmony with the scientific principles which I take for granted. My aim is more limited, though we ought to coincide in results so far as we cover the same ground. I have, as it were, surveyed the province from within, without attempting to pass the frontiers, whilst he reaches the province after surveying the whole empire of scientific thought; and therefore I have laid stress upon some matters which he treats with comparative lightness, whilst in other cases the relation is reversed.

In fact, however, I hold that there is ample room for any number of labourers in this field; nay, that there will be room for the labourers of many generations to come. I have no doubt that ethical problems will be debated long after I (it would be impertinent to consider the case of Mr. Spencer) am dead and forgotten. It is enough and more than enough if one can communicate the very slightest impetus to the slowly grinding wheels of speculation. At times, I have been startled at my own impudence when virtually sitting in judgment upon all the deepest and acutest thinkers since the days of Plato. But I easily comfort myself by remembering that the evolution of thought is furthered by the efforts of the weak as well as of the strongest; and that if giants have laid the foundations, even dwarfs may add something to the superstructure of the great edifice of science. So far as my reading has gone, I have found only two kinds of speculation which are absolutely useless—that of the hopelessly stupid, and that of the hopelessly insincere. The fool who does not know his own folly may be doing nothing, and the philosopher who is trying to darken knowledge may be doing worse than nothing; but every sincere

attempt to grapple with real difficulties made by a man not utterly incompetent has its value. I claim to come within that description, though I claim nothing more. And I have the satisfaction—not a very edifying one, it may be said, for a professed moralist—to reflect that if my book does no good to anybody else, it has provided me with an innocent occupation for a longer time than I quite like to remember; whilst I hope that there is nothing in it—if I may apply to myself what a discerning critic has said of Dr. Watts' sermons—'calculated to call a blush to the cheek of modesty.'

LESLIE STEPHEN.

London, *April* 1882.

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

### PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THE INQUIRY

#### I. *The Starting-Point*


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Nature of ethical controversy | 1 |
| 2. | Conciliation requires a right method | 2 |
| 3. | And a postponement of metaphysical problems | 3 |
| 4. | Metaphysical doubts are irrelevant in the sphere of science | 3 |
| 5. | Including the moral sciences | 5 |
| 6. | Truths in moral science independent of metaphysics | 6 |
| 7. | The sphere of science | 7 |


#### II. *Difficulty of Moral Science*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8. | The free-will difficulty irrelevant | 8 |
| 9. | Moral science, though not self-contradictory, may be unattainable | 10 |
| 10. | Imperfection of science generally | 10 |
| 11. | Hopeless complexity of the problem of individual conduct | 11 |
| 12. | Even average conduct too complex for calculation | 12 |
| 13. | Absence of a scientific psychology | 13 |
| 14. | Special difficulties from varying character and motive | 14 |
| 15. | Intermittent action of consciousness | 16 |
| 16. | Sociology as vague as psychology | 16 |
| 17. | Narrow limits of moral sciences | 19 |


#### III. *Attainable Results*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 18. | Empirical knowledge of conduct | 20 |
| 19. | Its relation to scientific knowledge | 21 |
| 20. | Difficulty of obtaining definitive rules | 22 |
| 21. | Statistical method insufficient | 23 |
| 22. | Method of political economy insufficient | 25 |
| 23. | Appearance of fatalism due to false assumptions | 27 |
| 24. | The permanent social structure | 29 |

### IV. *Theory of Social Evolution*

PAGE

25. Importance of study of social structure . . . . . 29
26. New significance of phenomena when regarded as indicative of organic growth . . . . . 31
27. The true statement of the problem of sociology . . . 32

### V. *The Ethical Problem*

28. Our problem is to discover the scientific form of morality . 33
29. Distinction between actual and ideal morality . . . . 35
30. Actual morality here concerned . . . . . 37

## CHAPTER II

### THE THEORY OF MOTIVES

### I. *The Problem*

1. An examination of first principles necessary . . . . 38
2. Excluding, however, the metaphysical principles . . . 38

### II. *The Emotions as Determining Conduct*

3. Happiness determines conduct in a scientific sense . . . 39
4. Some common objections are irrelevant . . . . . 40
5. The formula, though vague, is not meaningless . . . 41
6. It excludes an erroneous theory, but requires more precision . 42
7. Theory of happiness as the sole end of conduct . . . 43
8. Supposes a strictly inconceivable process . . . . 44
9. And in many important cases gives an erroneous formula—Objective and subjective ends . . . . . 45
10. Misrepresents the inseparable connection of emotion and reason . . . . . 47
11. Pain and pleasure as ultimate determinants of conduct . . 48
12. In all cases pleasure corresponds to stable and pain to unstable equilibrium . . . . . 49
13. Analogy of least resistance . . . . . 49
14. Nature of an act of choice . . . . . 50
15. Difficulty of discovering the sphere of volition . . . . 52
16. And of knowing our own desires . . . . . 53
17. True statement of the greatest-happiness formula—The province of reason . . . . . 53

### III. *The Reason as Determining Conduct*

18. All conduct 'reasonable' so far as giving an assignable law . 55
19. Senses in which conduct may be more or less reasonable . 56

PAGE
20. Reason not opposed to feeling as such . . . . . 57
21. Sense in which it may dispense with feeling . . . . 58
22. Latent feeling . . . . . 59
23. Feeling by signs . . . . . 59
24. Reason and feeling are mutually involved, and naturally develop together . . . . . 60
25. But may be considered separately — Reason as implying accuracy of judgment . . . . . 61
26. And consistency of motive insufficient to determine conduct . 62
27. Problem of the *summum bonum* . . . . . 63
28. Given a single end of conduct, the problem is definite . . 64
29. But men have in fact many partially inconsistent ends . . 65
30. The unity of the agent implies *de facto* commensurability of ends . . . . . 66
31. Reasonableness thus implies harmony and consistency of conduct . . . . . 67
32. But as character varies, the end is still indeterminate . . 68
33. So far, therefore, no sole end follows from reasonableness . 69

## IV. *Types*

34. Meaning of 'type' illustrated . . . . . 70
35. A typical instrument implies the solution of a problem . . 71
36. And a maximum efficiency of given means to a given end . 72
37. Æsthetic value of types . . . . . 73
38. The same principles apply to a living organism . . . 73
39. What corresponds in this case to the 'end' . . . . 74
40. The evolutionist theory suggests an answer . . . . 75
41. The evolution of vitally efficient types . . . . . 76
42. Extreme intricacy of any accurate statement . . . . 77

## V. *The Principle of Utility*

43. Conduct may be useful as 'pleasure-giving' or as 'life-preserving:' the two must tend to coincide . . . 78
44. Habits and instincts may be considered in either aspect . . 79
45. Necessity of distinguishing between organisms and aggregates . 80
46. Utility must be understood with reference to whole organism . 81
47. Ultimate theory of pain and pleasure irrelevant . . . 82
48. They must be functions of working condition of organism . 82
49. Correlation of painful and pernicious, pleasurable and beneficial . . . . . 84
50. Presumption in favour of more essential instincts . . . 85

VI. *Social and Individual Utility*

PAGE

51. Instincts essential to the race may be prejudicial to the individual . . . . . 86
52. Hence necessity of considering relation of race to individual . 87

## CHAPTER III

### THEORY OF SOCIAL MOTIVES

I. *The Individual and the Race*

1. Importance of the distinction . . . . . 89
2. Properties of the organic whole not inferable from properties of constituent units . . . . . 89
3. Dependence on race an essential property of man . . . 91
4. There must be a tacit or express reference to this in every theory of human nature . . . . . 92
5. Some properties may admit of independent variation . . 93
6. In simplest case, the organism may vary whilst social organisation is constant . . . . . 93
7. In most complex, organic variation implied by change in social organisation . . . . . 94
8. The most complex social organisation varies whilst individual organisation is constant . . . . . 95

II. *Society and Man*

9. The last is true of human societies . . . . . 97
10. Social development may take place without organic variation . 98
11. The accumulation of experience . . . . . 98
12. Inheritance of capital and skill . . . . . 99
13. Changes implied in language as a product of the social factor . 100
14. Necessity of considering the social factor . . . . . 102
15. The mutual dependence of the members of society . . . 103
16. The omnipresent social discipline . . . . . 104
17. Society to be regarded as an organic growth . . . . . 105

III. *Social Organisation*

18. Social organs . . . . . 107
19. Corporate sentiment implied in an organ . . . . . 108
20. Various developments of corporate sentiment . . . . 109
21. Every such sentiment implies the existence of more general sentiments . . . . . 111
22. The hierarchy of social instincts . . . . . 112
23. The constitution of each organ dependent upon contingent circumstances . . . . . 113

### IV. *Social Tissue*

PAGE
24. 'Social tissue' is the substratum of social organs . . . 114
25. Theory of evolution requires definition of units . . . 115
26. Relation of this to problems involving reference to social factor 115
27. Social development spread laterally as well as lineally . . 116
28. How this affects the struggle for existence . . . . 117
29. The unit of operation cannot be the State . . . . 118
30. Otherwise our problem would be the evolution of typical States 119
31. Nature of the social tissue . . . . . 120
32. Malthusian competition . . . . . 121
33. Complex nature of the actual process . . . . . 122
34. The vitality of the tissue has conditions capable of independent statement . . . . . 123
35. No precise test of identity of tissue . . . . . 124

### V. *The Family*

36. The family not co-ordinate with other forms of association . 125
37. It corresponds to more intimate and underlying order of forces 126
38. It represents the forces of cohesion of the social tissue . . 128
39. Recapitulation to show necessity of these distinctions . . 128

## CHAPTER IV

### FORM OF THE MORAL LAW

### I. *Law and Custom*

1. Customs and habits . . . . . 131
2. They are 'laws of nature' in the making . . . . . 131
3. Positive laws imply custom, including a potential element . 132
4. They must rest ultimately upon custom, not upon coercion . 134
5. Every society must have organic laws, intelligible only through itself . . . . . 136
6. It is dependent upon the vitality of corresponding social instincts . . . . . 137
7. We must therefore study the conditions of this vitality separately . . . . . 138

### II. *The Moral Law.*

8. The moral law must be an approximate statement of these conditions . . . . . 140
9. This does not necessarily give the reason, but only the cause of morality . . . . . 142

### III. *The Moral Law as Natural*

PAGE

10. Hence we may deduce certain attributes of morality—It is 'natural' . . . . . 142
11. Possibility of an artificial development of actual morality . 143
12. Morality must be a function of the organic instincts . . 143
13. In what sense it can be affected by a moral legislator . . 144
14. Morality only susceptible of secular variations . . . . 145
15. The 'immutability' and 'eternity' of the moral law deducible from this . . . . . 146

### IV. *Morality as Internal*

16. Change of form from 'Do this' to 'Be this' . . . . . 148
17. Why is the change important? . . . . . 148
18. The external and internal rules may approximate but cannot be coincident . . . . . 149
19. A general rule of conduct must be a rule of character . . 150
20. Extrinsic and intrinsic motives . . . . . 151
21. Some classes of conduct without intrinsic motive . . . 152
22. Most rules imply a variety of possible motives . . . . 153
23. Possibility of external rules due to habit and actual inconsistency . . . . . 153
24. They may correspond approximately to constant motives. . 154
25. The extrinsic motive of respect for authority implies occasional deviations . . . . . 155
26. Hence reference to authority or extrinsic motive must be eliminated from a true moral law . . . . . 155
27. The development of such laws is a process of induction . . 157
28. Hence the attribute of *de facto* 'supremacy' of moral law . 158

### V. *Basis of Morality*

29. Recapitulation . . . . . 160
30. Possible deduction of moral law . . . . . 161
31. Many laws which satisfy these conditions not moral . . 162
32. The distinction of the organism and aggregate to be borne in mind . . . . . 163
33. Hence we have to seek for the difference of the moral law . 164

## CHAPTER V

### CONTENTS OF THE MORAL LAW

### I. *The Law of Nature and Morality*

1. The law of nature includes prudence and morality . . . 165
2. Deduction of special virtues . . . . . 166
3. The cardinal virtues. . . . . 167

### II. *Virtue of Courage*

PAGE

4. Social welfare dependent upon strength, and especially upon courage . . . . . 168
5. Development of chivalrous sentiment . . . . . 170
6. Development of 'moral courage' . . . . . 171
7. Limitations to utility of courage . . . . . 172
8. Question whether courage is properly a virtue . . . . 173
9. Courage regarded by common sense with a quasi moral approval . . . . . 174
10. It is regarded as a necessary but not sufficient condition of virtue . . . . . 175
11. The development as a process of implicit induction . . . 176
12. Question whether approval implies perception of utility of courage . . . . . 177
13. The distinct perception emerges in later stages . . . 178
14. Approval of conduct as useful must itself be useful . . . 179
15. Possible non-fulfilment of this condition . . . . . 179
16. Tendency to its complete fulfilment . . . . . 180
17. Application to other virtues of strength . . . . . 182

### III. *Virtue of Temperance*

18. Temperance either prudential or strictly virtuous . . . 182
19. Change from external to internal rule . . . . . 183
20. The antisocial quality of sensuality produces the moral disapproval . . . . . 184
21. The sentiment goes beyond the utilitarian perception of 'consequences' . . . . . 187
22. The development of the ascetic theory . . . . . 187
23. Ascetic theory implies a one-sided but sometimes accurate assumption . . . . . 188
24. Ordinary and heroic virtues . . . . . 189
25. A tacit recognition of utility implied in these theories . . 190
26. In what sense all 'consequences' are to decide morality . . 191
27. The whole organic constitution must be taken into account . 191
28. Physiological element in the moral sentiment . . . . 193

### IV. *Virtue of Truth*

29. Social welfare dependent upon truthfulness . . . . 194
30. Slow development of toleration . . . . . 196
31. Possibility of an absolute statement of moral law of truthfulness . . . . . 197
32. Still the virtue is based upon social welfare . . . . 198

PAGE
33. Casuistical difficulties from an absolute statement . . . 199
34. The development of truthfulness resembles that of other virtues . . . . . 199

V. *The Social Virtues*

35. These virtues developed in the same way and based upon social welfare . . . . . 201
36. Justice and benevolence distinguished . . . . . 203
37. Justice means acting on sufficient reason . . . . . 203
38. The sufficient reason means social welfare . . . . . 204
39. Hence the duties really consistent are a development of the same principle . . . . . 205

VI. *The Social Definition of Virtue*

40. Recapitulation of the principles asserted . . . . . 207
41. Origin of problem of obligation . . . . . 208

## CHAPTER VI

### ALTRUISM

I. *Egoistic Instincts*

1. The possibility of self-sacrifice disputed . . . . . 210
2. The egoist denies the possibility of conscious self-sacrifice . 211
3. Beneficial consequence does not necessarily imply benevolent intention . . . . . 212
4. Gradual development of truly benevolent intention . . . 212
5. Doctrine of 'association' gives an apparently inadequate explanation . . . . . 214
6. Egoistic theory that the happiness of others can never be an ultimate end . . . . . 215
7. Implied truth that all motives may be stated objectively or subjectively . . . . . 216
8. The objective statement must express some condition of the subject . . . . . 217
9. If it includes the happiness of others, some further analysis is needed . . . . . 217

II. *Sympathy*

10. 'Objective' is that which exists for you as well as for me . 219
11. To think of another man is to have representative feelings . 219
12. Sympathy has a logical as well as an emotional value . . 220

PAGE

13. This is obscured by the ambiguities of ordinary language . 221
14. Nor does it give a full account of the process . . . . 222
15. Cruelty as identified with stupidity . . . . . 222
16. Or as inattention to implicit consequences . . . . 223
17. Complications introduced by antipathy . . . . . 224
18. Sympathy the fundamental fact . . . . . 225
19. Pleasure in pain as pain . . . . . 226
20. Normally sympathy means self-identification with others . 227
21. The difficulty is to understand the reverse feeling . . . 228

III. *Altruism*

22. Sympathy the condition of altruism . . . . . 229
23. All conduct conditioned by the agent's feeling . . . . 229
24. It is not therefore selfish . . . . . 230
25. Association does not explain it . . . . . 231
26. It must be conditioned by the agent's knowledge of other men's feelings . . . . . 231
27. But is not therefore removable at pleasure . . . . 233
28. The ideal conditions as fixed as the non-ideal . . . . 234
29. An egoistic interpretation still possible . . . . . 235

IV. *The Rule of Conduct*

30. The true question, what is the law of feeling? . . . 236
31. The 'greatest-happiness' principle of conduct . . . . 237
32. Virtual altruism of unreasoning instincts . . . . . 237
33. How affected by intellectual development . . . . 238
34. The purely prudential maxim never absolutely observable . 239
35. But approximately observable when sympathy is neglected . 241
36. Sympathetic motives are not necessarily divergent . . . 241
37. But can only conform fully so long as sympathy is dormant or factitious . . . . . 242
38. Systematic disregard of sympathetic virtues implies idiocy . 244
39. Their law implies regard to happiness of others as an ultimate motive . . . . . 245
40. The prudential maxim is taken up into the higher as society develops . . . . . 246
41. Fallacies involved in egoistic statement . . . . . 247
42. The true meaning of 'disengagement' . . . . . 248
43. Every end must correspond to a real motive . . . . 249
44. Benevolence not explicable by a tacit reference to self . . 250
45. Hence comparison of sympathetic and non-sympathetic agents 251

## CHAPTER VII

### MERIT

#### I. *The Conception of Merit*

PAGE

1. Virtue implies more than simple benevolence . . . . 253
2. Approval of virtue implies more than gratitude . . . 253
3. Hence the various problems of obligation . . . . 254
4. Merit is proportioned to the intrinsic goodness of the agent . 255
5. It represents a claim upon the universe . . . . . 256
6. The value set upon virtues varies with their utility . . . 257
7. Analogy in this respect to economical theory of value . . 258
8. Merit applies only to voluntary conduct . . . . . 260
9. And to qualities capable of training . . . . . 261
10. The merit of an action means the virtue proved by it . . 261
11. Morality cannot be independent of motives when true morality is developed . . . . . 262
12. Difficulties of distinguishing material and formal morality . 263
13. The genuine moral law must classify actions by motives . . 265
14. Recapitulation . . . . . 266

#### II. *Free-Will*

15. The nature of the free-will difficulty . . . . . 267
16. The merit must depend upon the motive . . . . . 268
17. Hence 'voluntary' means free from coercion, not from determination . . . . . 268
18. Free-will theory, so far as separating motive from conduct, is destructive of merit . . . . . 269
19. This includes responsibility . . . . . 271
20. The statement that we can form our own characters is irrelevant . . . . . 271
21. The *causa causæ* argument . . . . . 272
22. Causation does not lessen responsibility . . . . . 273
23. The difficulty arises from a false interpretation of causation . 274
24. Cause and effect imply mutual dependence, and therefore implication, but not coercion as something additional . . 275
25. Necessity is the antithesis of chance, and both subjective . 278
26. Fore-knowledge is consistent with responsibilty . . . 279
27. Thus the *causa causæ* argument is really irrelevant . . 280

#### III. *Effort*

28. Merit implies discipline . . . . . 281
29. A standard of action and membership of a class . . . 282
30. The change of the standard gives rise to ambiguities . . 283

PAGE
31. Difficulty of deciding the standard applicable to infants . . 284
32. And to madmen; but motive in all cases the criterion . . 285
33. The difficulty arises from the complexity of the facts, not from ambiguity of principle . . . . . 286
34. Hence the fallacy of measuring merit by effort without distinguishing the cases . . . . . 287
35. The man is most meritorious to whom virtue is easiest, provided that he belongs to the class . . . . . 288
36. Hence the problem whether essential instincts can be bad . 289
37. Development implies more than moral development . . 290
38. Effort so far essential to virtue that liability to temptation is essential . . . . . 290

IV. *Knowledge*

39. The love of virtue for its own sake . . . . . 291
40. How far does conformity to a law imply a recognition of law? 292
41. Reason, and therefore knowledge of law, implies a development . . . . . 293
42. But the implicit obedience to law may precede conscious acceptance of law . . . . . 294
43. Thus the problem becomes one of fact, not of principle . . 295
44. Transition and recapitulation . . . . . 296

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CONSCIENCE

I. *Theories of Conscience*

1. Merit implies intrinsically virtuous motive or conscience . 298
2. Difficulty of explaining the nature of conscience . . . 298
3. The deduction from pure reason ambiguous . . . . 300
4. The theory of a primitive faculty implies a wrong psychology . 301
5. The moral judgment is a function of the whole character . 302
6. Love of virtue for its own sake must be understood consistently with this . . . . . 303
7. A separate faculty not a conscience, but a conscientious man . 303
8. Conscience is therefore derivative, and not the less real though generally weak in point of fact . . . . . 304

II. *Sense of Shame*

9. Conscience implies an intellectual and emotional factor . . 306
10. The sense of shame seems to be one element . . . . 307
11. Shame is excited by offences other than moral . . . 308
12. By simply ridiculous, and even by right conduct . . . 309

PAGE
13. The general law depends upon heightened self-consciousness . 310
14. Hence implicated in conscience, but the relation to conscience variable . . . . . 310
15. The law of the feeling is not deducible from logical definition . 311
16. It gives rise to quasi intuitions, which, however, are variable . 313
17. Its possible variation limited by individual organisation . . 313
18. And by the law of the social organism . . . . . 314
19. Hence it is involved in moral development . . . . 315
20. Its law and its utility definable only through social factor . 316

III. *Æsthetic Judgments*

21. This distinctive quality of the ethical judgment consistent with its composite character . . . . . 318
22. Æsthetic judgments are equally composite . . . . 318
23. An æsthetic judgment may involve every primitive instinct . 319
24. It is differenced by form of gratification, not by instincts gratified . . . . . 320
25. Hence the moral judgment must include an æsthetic element . 321
26. The assimilation of the moral law implies the growth of such a sensibility . . . . . 322
27. Hence the so-called moral sense, which outruns the direct moral judgment . . . . . 323
28. Questions of 'taste' include a reference to objective facts . 324
29. The moral judgment an implicit judgment of types . . . 324

IV. *The Conscience*

30. The conscious ground of morality may vary widely from the cause . . . . . 325
31. Every association implies the development of a highly complex instinct of loyalty . . . . . 326
32. The sense of duty as the corporate instinct of the 'social tissue' is necessarily vague . . . . . 328
33. But it is definite because all organisations involve the fundamental instinct . . . . . 328
34. And because the true school of morality is the family . . 330
35. The reference to the tissue itself unconscious though essential 331
36. Morality is rooted in family sentiment, though divergence is possible . . . . . 332
37. Two points of view are thus necessary . . . . . 333
38. The conflict of duties possible, though the question is more of fact than morality . . . . . 334
39. Conscience is thus a modification of all primary instincts . 335
40. Application to the case of maternal love . . . . . 336
41. Transition to problem of happiness . . . . . 337

## CHAPTER IX

### HAPPINESS AS A CRITERION

#### I. *Utilitarianism*

PAGE

1. From the cause we infer the reason of morality . . . 339
2. Problems of the criterion and sanction of morality . . . 340
3. The utilitarian criterion . . . . . 341
4. Irrelevant objections . . . . . 342
5. Relevant objections to uncertainty, lowness, externality, expediency of code . . . . . 343

#### II. *The Evolutionist Criterion*

6. Utilitarianism based on the empirical philosophy . . . 345
7. Theory of 'lots' of happiness . . . . . 346
8. Tendency to regard society as an aggregate, not as an organism . . . . . 346
9. Inadequacy of method to give a scientific formula . . . 348
10. It makes a wrong assumption as to constants . . . . 349
11. The analogy of sanitary rules which refer to health instead of pleasure . . . . . 350
12. The evolutionist morality makes the same change in the moral criterion . . . . . 352
13. And thereby makes a code flexible and rigid in the right places . . . . . 353
14. Utilitarianism represents instantaneous morality, but requires correction when the organism varies . . . . . 353
15. Analogy of individual and social growth . . . . . 355
16. Importance of similar considerations elsewhere . . . 356

#### III. *Variability of Morality*

17. The standard must be affected by the average estimate of happiness . . . . . 357
18. But does not assume the desirability of a maximum of such happiness . . . . . 358
19. This implied in the nature of moral development . . . 359
20. The moral law implicitly commands an elevation of ideal happiness . . . . . 360
21. Another cause for lowness of utilitarian standard . . . 360

#### IV. *Extrinsic Morality*

22. The utilitarian rule tends to be external . . . . . 361
23. The egoistic utilitarian explains benevolence by extrinsic motives . . . . . 362

PAGE

24. Illustration of the miser . . . . . 363
25. External morality thus explicable, but not internal . . 364

V. *Expediency*

26. The altruistic utilitarianism is still said to rest on expediency. 365
27. It cannot make the conscience absolute . . . . . 366
28. Importance of observing general rules as understood by the utilitarian . . . . . 368
29. Consequences are in fact relevant . . . . . 368
30. A 'categorical imperative' not applicable to external morality 369
31. The sphere of casuistry when facts are not disputed . . 370
32. Utilitarian theory generally regarded as insufficient . . 372
33. The analogy of military duty . . . . . 373
34. Hence true principle in this case . . . . . 374
35. Which applies to the moral law . . . . . 375
36. The case of suicide . . . . . 376
37. Moral pedantry . . . . . 377
38. In what sense 'expediency' must be recognised . . . 377
39. A fixed criterion still remains . . . . . 379
40. Transition to problem of sanction . . . . . 380

## CHAPTER X

### MORALITY AND HAPPINESS

I. *The Sanction*

1. Why should a man be virtuous? . . . . . 381
2. Morality unconditionally useful to the society, not to the individual . . . . . 382
3. The problem of Job . . . . . 382
4. Presumption that virtue gives happiness to the virtuous . . 383
5. The standard of the virtuous not a standard for others . . 384
6. Nor is it possible to lay down an absolute and uniform standard . . . . . 385
7. Various senses of question . . . . . 386
8. Assumption that honesty is the best policy . . . . 388

II. *Happiness and Virtue*

9. The temptation to exaggerate the coincidence . . . . 388
10. Health the primary condition of happiness . . . . 389
11. Extension of the principle beyond bodily health . . . 389
12. Deduction from correlation of painful and pernicious . . 391
13. Equally true of the socially pernicious . . . . . 391

PAGE
14. It suggests the line of argument . . . . . 392
15. Happiness rewards obedience to law of nature, not to moral law simply . . . . . 392
16. A neglect of this leads to many of the perplexities . . . 393
17. This consistent with coincidence of happiness and virtue . 395
18. A man cannot be too virtuous for happiness normally . . 395
19. Confirmation from particular moral rule of temperance . . 396
20. The extension of the principle to other moral rules . . . 397
21. This applies equally to sympathetic and non-sympathetic motives . . . . . 399
22. Question of virtue in advance of actual standard . . . 400
23. The coincidence less perfect in this case . . . . . 401

### III. *Moral Discipline*

24. Natural aptitude for virtue . . . . . 402
25. The fact that virtue has to be acquired is generally irrelevant . 403
26. Moralisation part of a process which has other advantages . 404
27. Extension of the ordinary prudential argument . . . 405
28. Unity of virtue . . . . . 406
29. Moral idiocy possible . . . . . 407
30. No external morality possible in such cases . . . . 407
31. The prudential argument still valid . . . . . 408
32. A moral world generally desirable for all . . . . . 409

### IV. *Self-Sacrifice*

33. Self-sacrifice sometimes a necessary consequence of virtue: the case of Regulus . . . . . 410
34. No argument but the gallows available in some cases . . 412
35. This too follows from admission of real altruism . . . 414
36. The ultimate discord . . . . . 415
37. The general statement limits, but does not include it . . 415

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

1. Further controversies . . . . . 418
2. The insoluble difficulty . . . . . 418
3. The art and practice in other sciences . . . . . 419
4. In ethics both a science and an art . . . . . 420
5. 'Ought' and 'is' . . . . . 421
6. Beliefs about conduct imply laws of conduct . . . . 422
7. The scientific theory of positive laws . . . . . 423

PAGE

8. And of the moral law . . . . . 424
9. The belief to become effective must stimulate the emotions . 424
10. Morality not universally binding *de facto*, but only *de jure* . 425
11. Scientific ideal of a perfect correlation . . . . . 427
12. Progress implies discord . . . . . 428
13. Can the limits of the scientific inquiry be transcended? . . 429
14. Futility of ontology . . . . . 430
15. Importance of disentangling the scientific question . . . 431
16. Metaphysical inquiry means the elimination of ultimate fallacies, not the discovery of facts . . . . . 432
17. Metaphysics related to ethical as to other sciences . . . 433
18. The moral code is formed by scientific observation . . . 433
19. Metaphysics cannot affect this conclusion . . . . 434
20. The ontological and metaphysical theories are irrelevant . 435
21. The theological theory adds nothing to the scientific theory of permanence of morality . . . . . 437
22. The denial of the reality of evil . . . . . 439
23. The science of morality does not give the art, nor, therefore, the sanction of morality . . . . . 439
24. Religion and morality . . . . . 440
25. Belief affects conduct, but not the ultimate condition . . 441
26. The cause of belief must be considered . . . . . 442
27. Change of dialect not a change of ultimate belief . . . 443
28. The basis of morality unalterable . . . . . 444

# THE SCIENCE OF ETHICS

## CHAPTER I

### PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THE INQUIRY

#### I. *The Starting-Point*

1. At the outset of any inquiry it is proper to take stock of the results obtained by previous explorers of the same field, and in particular to ask how far they have reached that unity of doctrine which affords a presumption, though not a conclusive proof, of the attainment of definitive truth. If we examine the history of ethical speculation for this purpose, we are confronted by a fact which, were it not so familiar, might appear to be anomalous. In one sense moralists are almost unanimous; in another they are hopelessly discordant. They are unanimous in pronouncing certain classes of conduct to be right and the opposite wrong. No moralist denies that cruelty, falsehood, and intemperance are vicious, or that mercy, truth, and temperance are virtuous. Making every deduction from this apparent unanimity — allowing that similar names may be interpreted in very different senses; that the general outlines of a moral code may be the same whilst its spirit varies widely; and that the moral codes accepted at different times and places have been as different as has ever been seriously maintained—yet it remains true that there is an approximation to unity. The difference between different systems is chiefly in the details and special application of generally admitted principles. It is not such as we might anticipate from a radical opposition both of method and principle. But if we turn from the matter to

the form of morality; if, instead of asking what actions are right or wrong, we ask, what is the essence of right and wrong? how do we know right from wrong? why should we seek the right and eschew the wrong?—we are presented with the most contradictory answers; we find ourselves at once in that region of perpetual antinomies, where controversy is everlasting, and opposite theories seem to be equally self-evident to different minds.

2. This remark has long been familiar, but perhaps we have not, even yet, familiarised ourselves with some of its consequences. We must consider this protracted antagonism in the light of a principle which grows more prominent with the advance of historical methods of inquiry. Every widely-spread opinion deserves respect by the bare fact of its existence. It is itself a phenomenon which requires to be taken into account. We can no longer be content with refuting our opponents; we are also bound to explain them. The vitality of any doctrine supposed to be erroneous proves that it cannot be entirely erroneous. It must have an element of truth for which it is necessary to provide accommodation in any satisfactory system. It is a recognised criterion of successful speculation that it should explain not only the phenomena considered, but the illusions due to a partial view of the phenomena. The fact that the Ptolemaic system of astronomy can be fitted into the Copernican system as representing an imperfect view of the facts, whilst the relation cannot be reversed, is itself part of the evidence on behalf of the more comprehensive system. The necessity of applying this reflection to ethical doctrine has been widely recognised, though the difficulty of applying it is still enormous. Some writers aim at the desired conciliation by eclectic systems, which turn out to be mere tessellations of inconsistent fragments, instead of being harmonious wholes which absorb into themselves the partial and so far erroneous doctrine. More frequently, writers who try to explain the theories of their antagonists, explain only their own version of those theories; which is apt to be a very different thing. And this suggests that, in order to attempt a satisfactory conciliation, we have

first to raise a preliminary question as to the most promising method for reaching such a conciliation.

3. Now, if we ask what is necessarily implied in the attainment of a theory at once satisfactory in itself and wide enough to exhibit all preceding theories as imperfect and one-sided views of the whole truth, the prospect is rather alarming. For ethical controversies spring from the ultimate problems of all thought. Full conciliation can only be reached when we have attained a definitive system of philosophy. To reconcile moralists, we have to solve the problems which have agitated without being set at rest ever since men began to reflect upon the nature of truth in general. We have to decide upon controversies where the advance to unanimity, if it exists at all, is foreshadowed not so much in the unequivocal triumph of either party, as in the gradual modification of the old issues in such a sense that mutual understanding is becoming rather more possible. The problems are hardly being answered, but perhaps are being put into a form in which they may some day admit of an answer. If an agreement between moralists is to be adjourned until the day in which all metaphysical puzzles will have been solved, we must be content to hand them over to a future generation; and to say the truth, I believe that our hopes of a perfect conciliation must be adjourned till that indefinitely distant millennium. But another less disheartening conclusion is also suggested by the reflection that, in spite of these difficulties, there has been in other respects so much agreement. Is it not, in fact, conceivable that we may so disentangle the perplexing threads of controversy as to separate the questions which admit of some approximate answer from those which we must be content not only to leave unsolved, but to consider as of such a nature that even the method of solution, and the kind of solution possible and desirable, must be regarded as hitherto unsettled problems?

4. This will be clearer if we remark that the difficulty in question is by no means peculiar to ethical speculations. On the contrary, we may say that it is common to all branches of knowledge. We possess a large body of established

scientific truths—established, that is, in such a sense that their validity would be questioned by no school of metaphysicians. Geometry, for example, includes a vast body of propositions, which are admitted by all reasoners to possess the highest degree of certainty. Yet geometry involves the conception of space, and the true nature of that conception is precisely one of the problems upon which metaphysicians have disputed most eagerly and interminably. The geometrician proceeds without troubling himself in the least about such argumentation, and in the judgment of the metaphysicians themselves he is perfectly right. Space, according to some thinkers, has only a phenomenal reality; if so, the truths of the geometer are only applicable to phenomena. Space, as we know it, may perhaps be only one out of various possible kinds of space. If so, the doctrines of geometry can only be regarded as certain for that kind of space with which we are conversant. The geometer postulates space, and (it may be) one particular kind of space; but the validity of his reasoning, so long as that postulate is granted, remains unaffected. He is not concerned to inquire whether, in a different universe or in some transcendental world, his theorems may require modification or may cease to be in any way applicable. It is fortunate that this is so, for otherwise we should have no knowledge until we had reached the ultimate goal of knowledge. Similar remarks are applicable to all the physical sciences. We may say, in mathematical language, that the formulæ obtained by the scientific reasoner include constants regarded by him as ultimate elements, though the metaphysician may discover that these constants themselves require further analysis, and are possibly dependent upon some further condition for their apparent constancy. But the formulæ may be equally valid within the sphere of science whatever may be the metaphysical interpretation of these conceptions. The relation holds though the nature of the things related may be uncertain. If space be only phenomenal, the limitless properties will not hold in the noumenal world; but in this world, where phenomena are of so much importance, they will serve as well as ever for our guidance.

Thus we may say, in legal metaphor, that the man of science does not go behind the record. He takes the authority of his immediate perceptions as final, and leaves it to the metaphysician to discover, if he can, some further justification of the proceeding.

5. I am content, for the present, to assume this much, without attempting to define more accurately the relation between metaphysical and what are generally called scientific reasonings. However that line may be drawn, we may admit that, in the case of the physical sciences at least, we can obtain knowledge which, within its own sphere, is entirely independent of the metaphysician's theories. Is not this true in all cases, and therefore in those cases in which the science is concerned with the conduct and character of human beings? May we not discover propositions about the relations of men to each other and the internal relations of the individual human being which will be equally independent of metaphysical disputes? As we assign the relations between parts of space without asking what is space in itself, may we not determine rules about men without asking what is meant, for example, by personal unity, or what is the true mode of distinguishing object from subject? It is true that in these more complex investigations we are constantly on the verge of metaphysical abysses. The inquiry into the laws of thought is very apt to complicate itself with inquiry into the nature of thinking beings. The difficulty has given rise to many controversies. From one point of view, metaphysics has seemed to be merely a department of psychology, as the nature of men's thoughts seems to be dependent upon the constitution of the men who think. From another point of view, the opposite extreme seems to be more tenable, as the laws of particular modes of thought must form a special department of the inquiry into the laws of thought in general; and thus psychology must be taken up into and absorbed in metaphysics. And, in fact, as the case of ethical speculation itself proves, it is very difficult to reason about any question involving psychology without gliding into the ultimate metaphysical problems. And yet a discrimination of the two elements, though harder to main-

tain, may be as conceivable here as in the physical sciences. For it is a fact—and a fact for which we may again appeal to these ethical speculations—that there are a large number of propositions, which we are daily and hourly using, which refer to human nature, and which are presumably independent of metaphysical speculation. Like the geometrical truths, they involve elements which may require further analysis, but, like the geometrical truths, they will hold good, or at any rate hold good within a very wide sphere, whatever the results of such analysis.

6. Take, for example, any one of those theorems of which we constantly assume the truth. Most mothers, we say, love their children. That is a statement which conveys a distinct meaning, and a statement of which we can discover and test the truth without appealing to any metaphysical system. In order to express it at all, we have to use some conceptions which the metaphysician professes to explain. We tacitly assume a distinction between subject and object, a distinction between persons, a causal relation between certain phenomena, and so forth; and metaphysicians will proceed to deal with these distinctions and relations after their own fashion. They may tell us, for example, that we can transcend the distinction of subject and object; that persons, though phenomenally different, are different manifestations of an identical substance; that the relation of cause and effect is a mere illusion, or that it implies a transcendental power behind the phenomena. But all such statements, true or false, have not the very slightest influence upon our belief in the asserted fact. They state something supposed to be implied in the fact; but something also remains unaltered, whatever be implied. Nor is there the least reason to suppose that the phrase in question conveys a different meaning to metaphysicians of opposite schools. Solomon's famous experiment upon motherly love was not suggested by nor did it require to be reinterpreted by metaphysical theorems. The follower of Hegel means in all probability precisely the same thing as the follower of Hume when he says that a mother loves her child; though when they come to reflect upon certain ulterior imports of the

phrases used, they may come to opposite conclusions. The formula remains the same; for all purposes of conduct it evokes the same impressions, sentiments, and sensible images, and it therefore represents a stage at which all theories must coincide, though they start, or profess to start, from the most opposite bases.

7. I say, therefore, that without making any metaphysical assumptions, there is a region in which all metaphysical tenets are indifferent. This is the region of science; and though I cannot here attempt to define its limits, I consider that there is at least a presumption that some of the moral questions of which we are to speak, fall fairly within this region, and thus within a region to which the ordinary scientific methods are applicable. In order that we may reach a scientific conclusion in the sense here suggested, two conditions are necessary. The first is that with which we have been dealing: namely, that we should be able to discover relations that are unaffected by the metaphysical elements which they contain, which shall be true so far as they go, whatever our metaphysical theories. I do not dwell longer upon this question, because the most satisfactory way of showing that it can be complied with, is to comply with it; that is, to lay down propositions to which, in fact, metaphysical inquiries are plainly irrelevant. And this I shall attempt in the following pages. But there is another condition upon which I must dwell more fully. Scientific knowledge means simply that part of knowledge which is definitive and capable of accurate expression. It is merely the crystallised core of the vague mass of indefinite and inaccurate knowledge. It reaches the highest or most strictly scientific stage when it admits of being stated in precise propositions of unconditional validity. By unconditional, I mean, of course, that the conditions under which it holds are given in the proposition itself. It may be as much a scientific truth that all mammalia are air-breathing animals as that all particles of matter gravitate to each other. It is not necessary for the scientific character of the proposition that the existence of mammalia should be unconditional, but only that the existence of one property should be the sole and sufficient condition for

the existence of the other. But this unconditionality and precision represents an ideal which is seldom if ever realised; and propositions are generally called scientific which make some approximation to this quality. They are approximately scientific when they are precise enough to afford a generally reliable rule, and require conditions which are generally fulfilled; or, in other words, when they do not fully reveal and formulate a 'law of nature,' but make some approximation to that completeness of statement. We should not call the proposition 'Mothers love their children' a scientific proposition in the highest sense, because it is incapable of precise statement as an unconditional truth. Some mothers do not love their children. We have no means of giving any quantitative measure of the passion of love, and when we compare this statement with a purely scientific statement—as, for example, that gravitation varies inversely as the square of the distance—we are at once sensible that our formula falls altogether short of the requirements of science as we understand it in other branches of inquiry. Still the statement presumably includes an approximation to some scientific truth, and it is worth while to consider how far it may be rendered scientific, for in the endeavour we shall throw some light upon the problem before us.

## II. *Difficulty of Moral Science*

8. I shall only touch in the briefest way upon one objection to the possibility of a scientific treatment of moral questions which would be fatal, could it be sustained. I refer to the objection founded upon the doctrine of the so-called freedom of the will. I must decline to enter upon a controversy already thrashed out to the very last fragments of chaff. It is enough in such a case to indicate one's own position, and to refer for the arguments by which it may be supported to the innumerable writers who have considered it at length. Hereafter, indeed, I shall be obliged to say something of the questions under another aspect. For the present, I may observe that the theory of free will is relevant so far as it affects

or is supposed to affect what has been called the universal postulate. In all reasoning about facts, this postulate, whatever its true nature, must be invariably assumed. Whether we speak of the uniformity of nature, or of the principle of sufficient reason, or of the universality of causation, we are adopting different phrases to signify the same thing. To me, indeed, it appears that the theorem, in whatever form it may be most fitly expressed, is not so much a distinct proposition, the truth or falsehood of which can be discussed, as an attempt to formulate the intrinsic process of all such reasoning. Unless we assume that identical inferences can be made from identical facts we are simply unable to reason at all. The alternative to making the assumption is not to admit some other possibility, but to cease to think. If there is something arbitrary in nature; if a thing can at once be and not be; or if the same cause may produce different effects, the very nerve of every reasoning process is paralysed. We can no more argue as to phenomena than we can make a formal syllogism if we suppose that contradictory propositions are not mutually exclusive. Further, I can see no ground whatever for excluding the case of human conduct. I infer a man's actions from his character and circumstances, or his character from his actions, with the same confidence as I infer the path of a planet from the known determining forces, or the forces from the path. If two men act differently there must be some corresponding difference in the character or circumstances, as if two bodies produce different reactions there must be some corresponding difference in their chemical composition. Now, if the doctrine of free will be inconsistent with this theory, I must simply say that I reject it. If it be consistent with the theory, I have at present nothing more to do with it; for it is only in so far as it is inconsistent that it affects the possibility of a scientific treatment of ethics. I shall only add that, in any case, to reason about conduct is to assume that it is determinate. If actions be intrinsically arbitrary, or in so far as they are arbitrary, a theory of action must be a contradiction in terms. And thus, as it has been said, that whether we are or are not free, we must act as though we were free, I may say

that whether conduct be or be not determinate, we must reason about it as though it were determinate.

9. Passing over this difficulty, the question still remains, whether any science of human nature be possible in any other sense than this: that its existence does not imply a contradiction in terms. We have already the names of such sciences as sociology and psychology. Are they anything more than names, or is there any reason to suppose that they will ever be anything more? These problems are not impossible in the sense in which the problem of perpetual motion is impossible; for there is an answer to them, if only we could find or express it; but they may be impossible, in the sense in which it is impossible for an infant just learning arithmetic to calculate the movements of a planet. It can be made intelligible to him that the proposed operation has a meaning and an answer for more developed minds; but even an approximate calculation is altogether beyond his powers. At present the so-called sciences consist of nothing more than a collection of unverified guesses and vague generalisations, disguised under a more or less pretentious apparatus of quasi-scientific terminology. Can they ever be made precise and certain?

10. It is easy to show how far we are at present from any such consummation. The accepted test of true scientific knowledge is a power of prediction. In the typical science of astronomy that test has been satisfied. We can trace backwards and forwards through many ages the series of phenomena of the solar system. That we can do so is owing to the simplicity of the data and the conditions. Given the law of gravitation and the masses and initial position of two moving bodies, we can apply our formulæ and work out their movements. Yet even for this typical science it required a vast genius, and such a genius inheriting the labours of many generations of careful observation and acute reasoning, to work out the elementary problem. Complicate the conditions in the slightest degree, add the attraction of another body, and the problem becomes so unmanageable that the severest labours of the acutest minds, during generations of unparalleled progress, are unable to give us more than an

approximate solution. The law which is embodied in the movements of a planet lies, so to speak, on the surface of things; it is given in the greatest simplicity with the minimum of over-riding and conflicting influences; and therefore it is that we are able so far to disentangle the phenomena and reach an applicable result. In other cases, we have to perform a process of abstraction which is here done to our hands. Elsewhere we can obtain simple rules only by disregarding the heterogeneous mass of modifying circumstances with which the simple process is inextricably involved in concrete cases. And therefore we can only obtain certainty of prediction when we can ourselves so modify circumstances as to make them correspond to our ideal constructions. We can make a conditional prediction in regard to many concrete events; we can say that such and such processes will develop themselves if no interference takes place from without; or we can predict if we are able to obviate the risk of such interferences. We can be sure of an experiment in a laboratory, but our knowledge in regard to any series of events not voluntarily prepared is limited by the constant possibility of the interference of conditions which we have not foreseen or are unable to appreciate. And, thus, even where science is most perfect, our powers of proving it are as a rule bound within narrow limits.

11. Is it not, then, a mockery to join in one phrase such words as science and human nature? Will Cæsar cross the Rubicon? The problem is as determinate as the problem, Will a projectile fall on the hither or the further bank? But consider for a moment the conditions which must be taken into account in a solution. We must know the whole range of operative forces which will allow play for his will to act, and therefore have some negative information at least as to the universe at large; we must know what are the political, social, geographical circumstances which may possibly affect his decisions; we must know, again, how these complex facts mirror themselves in his mind; what are his calculations, his ambitions, prejudices, hopes and fears; we must know even what freaks of memory or sudden associations of names

and incidents may stir the current of his meditations; we must understand the laws of his character, and how it depends upon the state of his liver, his digestion and the electric tension of the atmosphere; for 'character' is the name of an undecipherable mass of sensibilities, inherited and acquired habits of reasoning and feeling, changing from day to day, baffling all calculations and eluding the shrewdest observer. The wiliest diplomatist trusts to crude generalisations, which fail as often as they are verified; our most confident anticipations of the friend whom we knew to his heart's core are put out by a toothache or a grain of sand in the wrong place; history is a record of 'fears of the brave and follies of the wise,' of confident anticipations falsified, and revelations of character which astonish no one more than the agent himself. Is it not as futile to apply the name of science to our guesses about the shifting and uncomprehensible network of thought and feeling which makes a character as to give it to the vague guesses of a shepherd who hopes a fine morrow from a red sunset? Even the 'scientific' meteorologist can scarcely foretell a day's weather; and yet his problem is simple and his knowledge accurate when compared with the vague surmises which we dignify by the name of sciences of human nature.

12. But let us look a little closer. We are pitching our standard too high. The test of predicting the result of any concrete set of processes is, as I have said, rarely if ever satisfied. There is always the tacit condition, that no interference will take place with our assumed data. I know that a stone thrown into the air will descend; I can calculate its path with minute accuracy, and define its range and velocity. But this is, of course, upon the hypothesis that it meets with no obstruction. As every event in the universe may be said to be more or less connected with every other event, it is plain that this condition can rarely be secured with absolute certainty. But I do not refuse the name of science to the general propositions which enable me to make this conditional prediction. On the contrary, they form the great mass of scientific knowledge. We must, therefore, consider more closely how far we can discover such rules about human

conduct. It is impossible to say whether Cæsar will or will not pass the Rubicon. It may be possible to say that most men would or would not cross; or, again, to say that Cæsar will cross under certain conditions, which again may correspond to the conditions most commonly fulfilled, and which may therefore give a certain degree of very useful knowledge. We may make some such statements with absolute confidence. Man, so far as he is a lump of matter, obeys certain mechanical laws. Throw him out of a window, and he will fall as though he were a lump of lead or a corpse. Chemical changes may be worked in his tissues as assignable as though he were simply a gas or a salt. So far as he is a living organism, we have to consider another set of conditions. He is the embodiment of a set of processes which are always taking place, and which are not deducible from the external circumstances. To know how he will act, we must sometimes know at what stage they happen to be. When he is thrown out of a window, this consideration is irrelevant. If we want to know how he will act when food is presented to him, they become relevant. We must know whether he is hungry or satisfied, awake or asleep, and so forth. But further, as he reasons and has motives, he responds to any external stimulus after a more complex fashion. His actions are regulated not only by the immediate action of his senses, but by innumerable anticipations of the future, recollections of the past, and inferences as to distant objects. So far as he is a thing or an animal, it is comparatively easy to determine his conduct. Given a starving dog and a lump of meat in contact, and you can predict the result. But to determine the behaviour of a human being with a glass of water presented to his parching lips, you must be in possession of an organon for calculating the action of human motive, and be able to unravel the tangled skein of thought and feeling which varies enormously from one man to another, and is determined by innumerable subtle influences, each of which sets all calculation at defiance.

13. To attack such problems as these, we require some tenable psychology. We may say that conduct is determined by pain and pleasure. We may repeat all the little maxims

which have been made popular by the observers of human character. But, to gain anything like scientific knowledge, we require some mode of estimating these pains and pleasures, and the faculties to which they appeal. If we had but a single passion, if we were only locomotive stomachs like a polyp, the problem would be simple. But man is a complex of numerous passions, a little hierarchy of conflicting, co-operating, mutually interacting emotions, which it is simply impossible to tabulate and measure. Numerous classifications have been made by acute observers. Yet I do not suppose that any of these can be regarded as more than a rough account of the most obvious facts. To ask which are the primitive and elementary passions, how they are related, and how the derivative passions are compounded, is to ask questions which admit of no definite answer. We are simply feeling about in the dark; putting rough guesses into pretentious shapes, or dressing poetical symbols in the language of science; but we are far, indeed, from anything which can for a moment deserve our confidence as a scientific analysis.

14. If, again, we could rely upon any such analysis, we should still be at the very outset of our task. Who can say what is the relative importance of the various parties in the little internal parliament which determines our policy from one moment to another, or by what subtle and inscrutable ties they are connected? Take, for example, the simple physical appetite of hunger. No doubt hunger determines many human activities, and we have a strong probability that a hungry man will eat when he has a chance. But how are we to say what felt hunger will play in any given organisation? What are the conditions, external or internal, which determine its strength and its influence upon our actions? It depends upon innumerable and indefinable conditions: upon the state of the constitution; the condition of the palate, and upon the various habits which we have acquired. It may be suspended entirely by grief, or by the affection of some bodily organ not obviously or normally concerned in determining its strength. Under certain conditions it becomes an overpowering impulse, capable of overcoming every

moral and prudential restraint. It causes mothers to desert their children, and breaks up the bonds of the discipline which has become a second nature. Under other circumstances, it loses all power. The glutton turns with loathing from the food which enthralled him a moment before, not merely if he is satiated, but in obedience to some accidental association which has called up a spasm of disgust. What is true of hunger is even more obviously true of the higher and intellectual emotions, of which we can only say that their composition is apparently complex in the highest degree, and the relation to other parts of the system vitally important and yet hopelessly obscure. So, again, if we know something of the constituent passions, we should still have to investigate the laws of what may be called mental perspective. It is a familiar fact, that the intensity of a passion varies in some way with the proximity of the appropriate object. The prospect of a pain at a certain distance scarcely affects us at all, though we may be perfectly convinced of its approach; and the immediate prospect of the same pain may be overpowering. A man may be utterly indifferent when he knows that he is to be hanged to-morrow, and yet be a hopeless coward on the gallows. His neighbour may tremble at the remote prospect, and yet meet death with all imaginable courage. The law according to which distance diminishes the corresponding feeling is inscrutable in itself, and varies according to inscrutable differences of temperament. And again, pains and pleasures of different classes vary in this intrinsic power of calling up the premonitory foretaste. A purely physical enjoyment, intense at the moment of fruition, is often unintelligible in the absence of the immediate conditions. A drunkard can easily deny himself his pleasures in prospect, and yet may be impotent in the presence of temptation. At a distance the disgrace of drunkenness is stronger than the appetite for drink. When the drink is at hand the appetite overpowers the most vivid sense of degradation. The same is equally true of the higher motives. A man habitually careless of duty and little inclined to benevolence may be capable, at moments of excitement, of heroic self-sacrifice. He may, like

Falstaff, make a mock of honour when he is cool, and yet when under the stress of immediate shame may throw away life rather than break a code of honour which he regards as ridiculous.

15. To mention one more familiar difficulty—for I am saying nothing which has not been a commonplace with all observers—I have hitherto spoken as though we always acted upon some conscious motive. But in a large part of our lives we are mere automata. We go through many, perhaps most, of our daily occupations with little more consciousness than a machine; and therefore it is impossible to foretell whether a given passion will or will not operate under certain circumstances. Were a man's consciousness always awake to all the consequences of his actions, we could say that he would act in a certain way. But consciousness acts fitfully; it goes to sleep or rouses itself in obedience to conditions which we are unable to assign. A man would act in one way if the results of the action were present to his mind, but he acts in another way simply because it is easiest for him to act to-day as he happened to act yesterday. The momentum of his past life causes him to continue in the groove in which he has placed himself. We are therefore unable to infer conduct from character unless we know what are those accidental chains by which it is bound. A man gives money or says his prayers, not because he is charitable or devout, but because he has been brought up to do so. Thus the data from which his conduct must be calculated include not only his true character but the special circumstances of his life. His conduct is probably a kind of diagonal between that which would be dictated by his instincts when fully conscious and that which is determined by another independent set of causes. If he were purely mechanical or purely rational in his actions, we could predict his behaviour; but he is alternately one and the other, and passes fitfully from the automatic to the conscious stage in obedience to conditions which altogether elude our powers of observation.

16. The conduct of man is as much dependent upon his moral and mental organisation as the various reactions of a

body upon its chemical composition. To make this general admission the ground of a science, we must know something more. We must know what are the elementary faculties; what their relative strength; what relations hold amongst them in virtue of the unity of the subject; and what are the laws by which they respond to any given stimulus, come into the foreground of conscious motive, and again pass for a time out of sight, to leave blind habits to occupy their vacant places. And upon such points we are in ignorance so profound, that, far from knowing the answers to our questions, we scarcely know how to put them intelligibly. If our psychological armoury is so scantily provided, can we find effective weapons in the nascent science of sociology? Can we reach certainty by studying the social instead of the individual organism? We do not, as might at first seem probable, find that the difficulties increase in proportion to the extent of the field of observation. We can often lay down trustworthy propositions in regard to an aggregate or an organic whole when we know little of the separate parts. We can determine the properties of a body though we should find it hopeless to trace the movements of a particular molecule; and the idiosyncrasies which make the study of individual character so perplexing neutralise each other, or become unimportant when we are dealing with a whole society. But this only proves that the difficulties do not increase in a compound ratio; it does not show that they are actually less. In truth, when we have to deal with a society, and try to tabulate and to measure the forces by which it is held together, we find ourselves in presence of perplexities resembling those which beset our psychology, whilst the vastness of the data required and the indefinite possibilities of change introduce other and apparently insoluble problems. What is the relation, for example, between the religious creed of a nation and its political sentiments? What is the force of the selfish or antisocial passion, and the force which restrains it within such bounds as are consistent with order? What are the conditions of moral and intellectual progress, and what will be the probable action of any new belief, or of a change introduced in the

material conditions of life? To ask such questions is to suggest the extreme vagueness of all our guesses and the immense complexity of the problem. I need not say how shortsighted are the ablest statesmen, and how constantly that which happens is precisely the one thing which nobody foresaw, but which, after the event, appears to have been just what every one should have foreseen. What will be the effect of teaching reading or writing? If the question be asked in regard to an individual, we are perplexed because the variability of character and understanding makes it difficult to judge of the effect upon a given intellect. We can speak more confidently of the average effect, because the individual variations will correct each other when we are dealing with a mass. But when we ask the further question, in what way this ascertainable effect (we suppose it to be ascertainable) will react upon the whole social structure? we have another set of problems of the most intricate kind. Will the increase of knowledge make men content or discontented? Will it confirm or shake the beliefs upon which the social order depends? Will it simply strengthen the impulse towards a higher culture, or will it also increase the tendency to self-indulgence and weaken the bonds of discipline? If we can give some vague answer to such questions, it is clearly not such an answer as can be called scientific, or as enables us to give any definite prediction of results. It is difficult to predict what will be the effect of special circumstances upon an individual; but if the society of which he is a member remains approximately unaltered, we can give a fair guess as to the probable consequences of an ascertained modification of his character. But that which is a very slight change in each individual may involve a vast and incalculable alteration in the social equilibrium when we suppose that a whole class is affected and the conditions of national life modified through its whole extent. When we reflect upon the extreme difficulty of obtaining the necessary knowledge, of appreciating the state of mind of millions of men, of discovering the latent passions which may be smouldering amongst them, their state of accessibility to new ideas and new conditions of life, we may well feel the

untrustworthiness of our so-called scientific methods. The discovery of a new principle in mechanics or the promulgation of a new religious creed may alter the whole social state or bring about political and social convulsions. But how can we predict new discoveries or new creeds? To foretell a discovery is to make the discovery yourself, and to make it before its time. To foretell the new creed is to be yourself the potential religious reformer; and to foretell the effect of both upon the society in which they are promulgated is to trace out a complex series of actions and reactions, to appreciate the state of mind of masses of men, and the mode in which they will be affected by a given thought, and, moreover, to be provided with a quantity of information as to facts for which there can hardly be room in any individual brain. Any one who should have prophesied the history of the present century at its beginning with any precision would have had himself to foresee the course of science, the attitude taken by the greatest thinkers, the influence upon men's imaginations of new conceptions of the world, and to have traced out an incalculable series of changes in the relations of classes, and to determine the effect of all these changes upon the material conditions of existence. Any shortcoming might omit some essential point. In short, the prediction of the course of history, even in general terms and for a brief period, would require an intellect at least as much superior to that of a Socrates as the intellect of a Socrates is superior to that of an ape. Indeed, we may say the greater the intellectual development, the greater is the difficulty of foreseeing the results which the intellect will obtain. And therefore there is a kind of natural limit to the development of the powers of human nature. For as the intellect becomes more capable of grappling with the old problems, the complexity of the problems presented tends itself to increase.

17. I have dwelt upon such considerations partly to illustrate the nature of the difficulty, and partly to obviate the impression that in using the word 'science' I supposed that a science of human nature could either now or at any future time make any approach to the accuracy or certainty of the

physical sciences. A shorter road to the same conclusion might have been taken by simply challenging believers, if such there be, in such sciences, to produce any proposition which possesses, or even claims, the same sort of authority as belongs to the doctrines of a fully constituted science, or to justify such claims by adducing any instance of scientific prevision. But I do not anticipate any serious objections to this part of the argument, and it is perhaps more important to consider the more positive results. We have briefly surveyed the ground upon which our superstructure is to be reared, with the result, so far, that it is too treacherous and unstable to bear any solid edifice. Let us consider next whether any trustworthy space is left after all these deductions, and what kind of confidence may fairly be challenged for any philosophic construction.

### III. *Attainable Results.*

18. After all that has been said, it must be admitted, as I have incidentally admitted, that we do in fact possess a considerable degree of knowledge as to the conduct of our fellow-creatures. A confidence that our neighbours will act in accordance with certain anticipations is essential to almost every part of our conduct. I do not carry weapons in London now, as I should carry them in barbarous towns, because I am as certain that the passengers will behave peaceably as I am that the houses will not fall on my head. I trust my whole fortune with complete confidence to my bankers or lawyers, because, though I know that there are such things as knavish men of business, the risk is not great enough to affect my conduct. I act as confidently upon the assumption that mothers love their children as upon the assumption that London Bridge will bear the weight of the passing crowds. I have as little doubt that a toothache or a liver complaint will diminish a man's happiness as I have that a stone is indigestible. Moreover, such knowledge sometimes reaches a high degree of discrimination. The great dramatist, we say, knows the human heart; he does not know it as the man of science knows the properties of a chemical compound; that is,

he cannot draw out any specific set of propositions to express his knowledge—he cannot give chapter and verse for his conclusions; but he can feel, though he cannot explain, how a selfish or a heroic character will think and act under given circumstances. His power over our sympathies is proportioned to the truth of his divinations, and therefore to the degree in which we too recognise the truth of his portraiture. So the diplomatist or the attorney who watches every phrase and gesture of his antagonist draws conclusions as to their feelings and character which are often of startling accuracy. He relies, it may be, too much upon certain principles which are frequently inaccurate and never infallible. He can assign them and consider them collectively to embody a knowledge of the world. And though the shrewdest of such men, statesmen, courtiers, solicitors, or confessors, is liable to innumerable blunders, the very capacity of reasoning upon such matters implies that there is some such knowledge. There is, in fact, a vast difference in the acuteness with which men judge of character; and as some are acuter than others, it must be that they have at least implicit canons of judgment which are not entirely valueless.

19. The knowledge thus assumed does not differ in kind from scientific knowledge. There is, in truth, only one kind of knowledge; and knowledge gradually passes into the scientific state as it becomes more definite and articulate. We can hardly distinguish in respect of certainty between much of the knowledge called scientific and much of this floating and indefinite knowledge. A very vague proposition may often give rise to certainty inasmuch as it excludes many conceivable hypotheses. I do not know exactly how long a man may live, but I am quite certain that he will not live for a thousand years. If I know a man to be a coward, I cannot say exactly what will frighten him, but I can be very certain that he would run away from a fiery flying dragon. But knowledge, however certain, remains in the unscientific stage so long as a proposition is of such a nature that I cannot define the conditions under which it will hold true. My certainty that a boat into which I am about to step will

support my weight is not greater than my certainty that a mother will try to save her child from drowning. In both cases my knowledge as to the particular fact is immediately founded upon a rough estimate of the facts before me. I rehearse the events in imagination, and my imagination may be able to rehearse them accurately. But there is this difference: that in the case of the boat I can state the general conditions of floating and sinking with an accuracy which may pass for absolute. I know that the result will depend upon the relations between the weight of the boat and the weight of the water displaced, and upon other precisely measurable and ascertainable conditions. I cannot make a similar statement in the case of the mother. My psychology affords me no tenable analysis of the passions called into play, and no measure of their intensity. There are such things as 'unnatural' mothers, and I cannot say what innate sensibilities or what subsequent culture are required in order to develop the more normal intensity of feeling. Thus, though the strength of my conviction in a given case may be fully justifiable, it does not afford a safe generalisation. I know that the rule will fail occasionally, and I cannot tell when. If, therefore, I try to discover a principle of universal validity under which the particular case may be ranged, I am at a loss. I may, in my ignorance, be omitting the essential conditions and retaining those which are contingent. I explain the sinking or floating of the boat by referring to a theory which, upon whatever grounds, the man of science holds to be immutably or unconditionally true. But I cannot regard the principle, Mothers love their children, as having this degree of validity, as it is liable to exceptions and to limitations dependent upon some hitherto unknown principle. Thus the highest degree of certainty obtainable is represented by the assertion that most mothers, and not that all mothers, love their children.

20. Now for many practical purposes this conclusion is amply sufficient, and I must refer for its logical justification of the belief which it represents to works upon the theory of induction. In any case, it represents one of those beliefs

upon which we are in daily and hourly reliance. But the difficulty which I have noticed is one which must be felt when we try to give any scientific theory of human conduct, and which, as I need hardly observe, is constantly brought forward against all empirical systems of morality. For the scientific reasoner must endeavour to show not only that things are so and so, but that they could not have been otherwise. I do not mean by this that he is called upon to give an *à priori* deduction of the laws which he investigates. It is clear enough, after my previous remarks, that this, in the case of psychological inquiries at least, would be to demand impossibilities. But he must at least give some answer to the question why are things so and so? So long as his generalisation merely amounts to a statement of average behaviour of the phenomena, it does not give us a law. It does not tell us under what circumstances the rule will hold good, or what would be the consequences of a deflection from the rule. In the assumed case, it is only when a man can tell us, however vaguely, what are the conditions of maternal love, or what organic change is implied by its absence, that we approach a scientific theory of the passions. It is just this question which is made so difficult by the absence of any tenable psychology. The bare fact that, according to our experience, maternal love is the rule, does not enable us to say whether it is a mere accident, or fashion, something which might be present or absent without any material difference, or, on the other hand, a passion rooted in deepest grounds of human nature, and only to be removed by a radical alteration in the whole organic system. In short, human nature, upon this first superficial examination, seems to be a mere aggregate of faculties which take one form at one moment and another at the next, but which does not afford a sufficiently plain ground for scientific inquiry.

21. Without asking at present how far this affects any ethical system, I may next observe that the difficulty is sometimes attacked by simply extending the area of observation or increasing its accuracy. The facts of conduct are, it is suggested, determinable, and determinable with a great degree

of accuracy. Little as we know of the psychology of maternal love, we may discover, by simply counting, what proportion of mothers commit infanticide in a given space of time, and we may prophesy as to the number who will commit infanticide in a similar period of the future. Relying upon such facts, we may pass over the psychological difficulties already noticed, or the metaphysical puzzles about free will; for we have a definite basis of objective fact, which at any rate supplies us with many necessary data. I do not for a moment desire to under-estimate the importance of such a procedure, and yet it must be noticed that it does not help us very far towards a solution of our problem. The general fact which is revealed by such observations is one which we have already taken for granted. It is proved, for example, that the number of infanticides bears a fixed proportion to the population. If it were proved, as people sometimes seem to fancy, that this proportion is always observed whatever the social condition in other respects, we should indeed be in presence of a very startling fact. But it need hardly be said that this is not proved, and that the very purpose of statistical inquiries implies a belief that it is not a fact at all. What is proved is what we have taken for granted: namely, that under the same circumstances — including both external circumstances and the character of the race—human conduct will not alter. This is the doctrine of the uniformity of nature, already assumed in all our arguments; and the utmost that can be said is that statistical inquiry proves that circumstances are more constant than we might have supposed. There is nothing strange in the fact of our guesses on such matters turning out to be more or less erroneous. Our problem, however, lies beyond this. We count the number of infanticides because we hope to find the law according to which the number varies; to show how it depends upon the density of the population, its comfort or misery, its state of civilisation or barbarism, and so forth. Unluckily the facts which we have thus ascertained with numerical precision only bring us in face of new difficulties. We are trying to find an answer to a very complex problem, and are applying what is called the method of 'concomitant

variations.' It appears, let us suppose, that the number of infanticides is greater in one place and period than in others. Then we have to ask, why is it greater? And we immediately discover that the relevant conditions are so numerous and intricate that we are scarcely further advanced than before. The religious convictions of a race, its social arrangements, its state of material prosperity, and so forth, may all exercise an influence, and we are generally left to conjectures, every one of which might excite controversy. It may certainly be doubted whether any plausible theory has really been suggested or confirmed by this method; nor will this cause surprise if we consider how numerous and varied are the experiments necessary to reveal a new property in some substance capable of scientific treatment, and how exceedingly limited is our power of trying scientific experiments upon human society. The difficulty, in fact, is so great, that the ablest representatives of empirical methods have agreed to give up the effort as impracticable.

22. They have sometimes professed to meet the difficulty by a method illustrated by the case of political economy. We may, it is said, discover certain truths by an indirect method, though the application of direct methods is impracticable. Political economy is said to be founded on the hypothesis that human beings are actuated by the desire for wealth, and thus involves conclusions which are true so far as that assumption is true. Inversely, therefore, we may discover from the conformity of our deductions to observed facts how far our primary assumptions were justifiable. To me it appears that the statement is inaccurate. Economists undoubtedly assume that most men prefer a guinea to a pound in commercial transactions; but they also assume beyond this that men are influenced by all those passions, whatever they may be, which enable them to live together peaceably, to co-operate in innumerable ways, and to put confidence in each other's dealings. This implies far more than a desire for wealth—as, for example, respect for property—and therefore the existence of all that complex system of regulations which prevents the desire for wealth from manifesting itself in cutting throats; and thus

the science—if it deserve the name—may give results which are valid so long as the existing organisation holds together, that organisation being manifestly dependent upon countless instincts, beliefs, and so forth, which lie altogether beyond the scope of the economist. But the organisation may change, and has in fact changed within historical times, in consequence of the development of processes upon which he can throw no light. Thus his power of dealing with any series of social phenomena is confined within narrow limits. It is concerned, I should say, with the external and mechanical relations between different parts of the social organisation, not with the principles of vital growth. The economist can investigate with great advantage such problems as the incidence of a tax or the effects of free trade. He can show what are the channels along which wealth circulates while the existing system is unaltered; but as soon as he goes further, he is in presence of the old difficulties. He shows, for example, that an increased population means a diminished share of wealth to each person, and that an increase of wages means a diminution of employers' profits. For short times, and assuming no correlative social change, his doctrine may be unassailable; but if we ask what will really be the effect of limiting the population or of a sudden rise of wages, we have to ask other questions of most vital importance. Will the increased prudence mean a general lowering of energy? Will it imply the adoption of practices fatal to national morality, and therefore to its industry? Will an increase of wages increase drunkenness or stimulate saving? and if so, within what limits and with what results? These problems, again, involve innumerable moral, social, and religious questions, to which the economist, as such, has no answer to give; and yet, if unable to answer them, he cannot fully solve even the economical question. These considerations are enough to show the feebleness of the supposed attempt to isolate a particular impulse and consider its consequences apart. The intricate actions and reactions between different elements of the individual and the social organisation set all such attempts at defiance. The economist is really forced to consider as constant precisely those forces which the socio-

logist has to regard as incessantly changing, and whose mutual relations are the very subject-matter of his inquiry. And thus the results of economical inquiry, however valuable in themselves, are restricted to a limited sphere, and take for granted the very points which we are concerned to investigate.

23. Meanwhile, however, the establishment of the fact that such laws are ascertainable, even if their significance be exaggerated, has undoubtedly been of great service towards advancing scientific methods. The remark generally elicited by their enunciation, though founded on a misconception, explains their real value. They are regarded, in fact, as tending to confirm a fatalistic theory. If murders, it is said, are constant in number, and yet murderers are not moved by any desire to make up a given tale of crimes, the observed uniformity must be due to some mysterious agency. Some dark fate must pick out a certain number of men every year and order them to cut (or, as we must add in equity, to abstain from cutting) their neighbours' throats. And the criticism would be just if it were asserted that the number was constant whatever the social state. The paradox results from the fact that, on the one hand, a regularity in a number of events implies that the events have a direct influence upon each other, whilst, on the other hand, it seems clear that in the supposed cases each man acts in complete independence of his neighbour. There would be nothing strange in the fact of a fixed number of murders if there was such a relation between the events that each murder successfully achieved diminished the temptations in some given proportion; if, for example, there was a limited number of tyrants who united together, and the murder of one enabled the others to guard themselves more effectually. But it is easy to remark that uniformity of this kind may equally well result where each event is a collateral and independent effect of certain fixed causes. One mother does not commit infanticide, nor does another give birth to a blind child, because another has murdered her child or had a blind baby. But the numbers will be uniform so long as the predisposing causes are uniform and act upon similar material.

If certain unhealthy conditions of life remain constant, so will the diseases which they produce. Where there is a certain quantity of undrained marsh, there will be a certain quantity of ague, and (as some philosophers have urged) a certain quantity of belief in hell-fire, until the discovery of the virtues of bark may eradicate both evils. Now the conditions which produce murder are not of this palpable and material kind, but it does not follow that they are not equally fixed. Society, in fact, is a structure which, by its nature, implies a certain fixity in the distribution and relations of classes. Each man is found with a certain part of the joint framework which is made of flesh and blood instead of bricks or timber, but which is not the less truly a persistent structure. There is room for so many rich and so many poor, for such and such fixed numbers of lawyers, and clergymen, and scavengers. The structure can be modified, and is always being gradually modified; but it can only change gradually, for each change involves the reorganisation to some extent of the rest of the body, and a complex system of action and reaction. The social body is no more liable to arbitrary changes than the individual body, though its organisation is not so externally conspicuous; and it is really no more surprising that there should be throughout long periods a fixed proportion of paupers than that through much longer periods animals should be produced with the same bodily proportions. Whilst this is so there will be an approximately constant number of persons in the same bodily and mental state, exposed to the same conditions and temptations; and therefore, again, there will result a number of minor uniformities which appear surprising so long as we take each man separately and regard him as a being independent of his neighbour, but which are perfectly intelligible in so far as they are the natural products of many underlying uniformities due to the social structure. Consider each atom of a tree by itself, as the plaything of an intricate chaos of forces of bewildering perplexity, and you may wonder that the same number of leaves is produced every year; but when you remember that each atom is part of a structure bound together by a number of mutual relations, the wonder vanishes.

And it is equally true of that more obscure structure which we call human society.

24. Thus our previsions as to human conduct are not simply statements of an average result. If I know that there are ninety-nine blanks in a lottery and one prize, I am certain that only one of a hundred drawers will be successful, though quite uncertain as to which it will be. I could know only if I knew a number of details as to the distribution of tickets and the movements of men's hands of which I know nothing. In regard to many social phenomena, I have the same kind of knowledge. I know that there must be a fringe of destitute people hanging upon the skirts of society, a small number of prizes to be won by the most energetic or fortunate, and a number of intermediate places into which the remainder will be distributed by mutual pressure. There are so many officers, privates, and hangers-on to an army, though I cannot say which place will be occupied by a given man. The members of a given society are forced to accommodate themselves to certain fixed conditions as much as the iron which is poured into a given mould. There is a causal connection underlying the apparently arbitrary movements of the individual. The social struggle is thrusting down the weaker into the position where want of food is most felt and stealing most tempting; and character is being determined in countless indirect ways by the mutual pressure of the various classes. Men are not only more or less alike, and so far approximate to a certain average, but they are also being constantly educated in a thousand ways by the persistent conditions of the social organism; and thus there are secondary or derivative laws of conduct dependent upon these conditions and producing uniformities not affected by the variation of individual idiosyncrasy.

## IV. *Theory of Social Evolution*

25. A full realisation of this truth, which is of course a very old truth in substance, a perception that society is not a mere aggregate but an organic growth, that it forms a whole,

the laws of whose growth can be studied apart from those of the individual atom, supplies the most characteristic postulate of modern speculation, and we may note its general bearing upon the problem before us. The explicit and constant recognition (for there has always been a kind of recognition) that society forms such an organic growth, that its properties can be studied separately, and cannot be inferred directly from the characters of the component individuals, does not indeed relieve us from the difficulties already noted—for by recognising that the laws are there we certainly do not discover what the particular laws are—nor does it, in any case, suggest the possibility of any *à priori* theory upon the subject. We cannot say, previously to any study of the organism, that it is so, and that it could not have been otherwise. On the contrary, we may suppose that many other forms of society besides those with which we are acquainted may be possible, and may be actually realised under different conditions. If anybody should maintain that in some other planet the propagation of the inhabitants may be carried on by a totally different method, and that there may be no distinction of the sexes, I do not see how it would be possible to confute him, and under such circumstances the whole social structure would be organised upon very different principles. The utmost to which we can aspire is to show how different parts of the structure mutually imply each other; so that, given the whole, we may see that any particular part could not be otherwise; and this, though a less ambitious conclusion, would be amply satisfactory for scientific purposes. I know of no *à priori* proof, and for my part I cannot conceive one, which should establish the necessity for a human being consisting of just so many organs, of a stomach, lungs, heart, legs, and so forth; still I am quite able to show that under existing circumstances each part of the framework is a highly convenient part of the whole, and I can more or less determine the conditions which—still upon that understanding—best fit it for playing its part. Nor, again, has the assumption which we are considering enabled us to acquire that degree of knowledge which would enable us to predict the future course of history, nor—if I am right in what I have

already said—made it even conceivable that such knowledge will ever be attainable.

26. What advantage, then, is gained by accepting this theory? The first gain is the simple recognition that there must be laws, and that there may be discoverable laws of social growth which are essentially relevant to our investigation, but which previous methods of inquiry have tended to ignore. So long as reasoning has been conducted upon the tacit assumption that social phenomena can be satisfactorily explained by studying their constituent atoms separately attention was diverted from some most important principles. If we could have studied the body on the assumption that each organ had an independent vitality which required no reference to the other organs to make its laws of growth intelligible, we should gain a good deal by simply recognising the existence of the whole organism. There are cases in which we may study a number of units separately, and thence infer the properties of a whole figured from such units. There are other cases in which the properties of each part are so dependent upon the whole that it is impossible to understand them separately without reference to the properties of the whole. If the problems of human conduct really fall under the second category, and if at the same time we assume them to belong to the first, we shall manifestly neglect some essential conditions. The symptom of the error will be, that, as we have omitted a reference to certain regulative principles, some of our data will appear to be arbitrary, simply because we have not attended to the conditions by which they are actually determined. My statement must necessarily be vague at this stage of the argument, but I shall endeavour to work it out hereafter. I may, however, add already, that the assumption in question gives a new significance to the facts before us. It shows how facts which we were previously content to leave unexplained, and perhaps to set down as ultimate and inexplicable data of the problem, may be important embodiments of the principles to be discovered. Vast importance has been given to many apparently trifling facts by the theory of evolution, as applied to all the sciences which have to do with organised beings.

What was formerly set down as a freak of nature, or dismissed from the sphere of the explicable by some verbal reference to a special creation, turns out to be an important link in a chain of evidence as to past conditions of organic life. And so in sociological inquiries, we find that some apparently trifling and arbitrary custom, which to certain observers passed for a mere barren curiosity, gives a sudden and effective illustration of remote social states. And what is true of exceptional peculiarities is equally true of the more permanent properties of social organisation. I am now enabled to see that a statement which seemed only to describe the average mode of behaviour of independent beings has really a vast significance when considered as describing a quality of a persistent organism. For the theory of evolution brings out the fact that every organism, whether social or individual, represents the product of an indefinite series of adjustments between the organism and its environment. In other words, that every being or collection of beings which forms a race or a society is part of a larger system ; that it is a product of the continuous play of a number of forces constantly shifting and rearranging themselves in the effort to maintain the general equilibrium, and that consequently every permanent property represents, not an accidental similarity, but a correspondence between the organism and some permanent conditions of life.

27. It may thus be said that the whole history of the world and its inhabitants represents a problem of stupendous magnitude. A being of vastly superior powers might conceivably work out that problem, if he were acquainted with the data at any particular moment, and capable of unravelling all the inconceivably complicated forces which are conflicting and co-operating, and calculating their resultants. To us, who are only infinitesimal parts of the system, the impossibility of any such attempt is almost ludicrously obvious. We work out the problem by living, or rather we work out our own little bit of the problem. We are utterly incompetent to grasp the whole, or to rise above it and say why such and such data must have been given, and what will be the further stages of the process. But when we once recognise the fact that the problem is being

worked out, we see also that an answer is actually given in some degree by the very facts before us. Our own lives are the answer. We can thus obtain certain results, *à posteriori*, by recognising the sense in which the evolution of history is really the solution of the problem. If we can succeed in putting the question fairly, we shall find the answer to it ready written upon the facts. This is really the nature of the change in the point of view implied in the acceptance of the evolution theory. It tells us what is the proper mode of interrogating nature. When we know the laws of gravitation we can prove that planets must move in ellipses. If we knew nothing of the law of gravitation or were unable to calculate its effects, but yet knew, in general terms, that there was some such law, and that it was the sole law in operation, we might be able to infer that elliptical movement was a necessary consequence of its action. The planets, it has been said, are constantly engaged in working out complex differential equations. They give us the answer to a set of problems which no human brain may be sufficiently comprehensive to solve without such experience. This kind of solution is equally given by the incomparably more complex phenomena of human life; and when we fully recognise the fact that a problem is being solved, we have only to gain some appreciation of its general nature and conditions in order to obtain some important, though it may be very limited, conclusions as to the meaning of the answer which may fairly be called scientific. They are not scientific in the sense of giving us quantitative and precise formulæ, but they may be so far scientific as to be certain and verifiable.

## V. *The Ethical Problem*

28. We may apply this briefly to the special problem before us. That problem is, in fact, to discover the scientific form of morality, or, in other words, to discover what is the general characteristic, so far as science can grasp it, of the moral sentiments. The difficulty by which we were met was the apparently arbitrary and fluctuating nature of all human instincts. We could see our way to saying that, as a general

truth, and in the average, people did in fact have such and such feelings. But the uncertainty of the data seemed to paralyse any further inferences. We had no apparent reason for saying why they might not have an entirely different set of feelings. And, in one sense, the difficulty is irreconcilable, or at least unanswerable from the purely scientific point of view; for I do not now ask how far it may be met by an assumption of transcendental or metaphysical principles. But the conception which I have just endeavoured to explain may show how, when we consider human beings to be the product of a long series of processes of adaptation or adjustment, acting either upon the individual or the social organism, we may hope to discern that any given set of instincts corresponds to certain permanent conditions, and how one part of the organism implies another, or how, the whole being given, the relation between its facts follows, and thus how the general system hangs together. We can attack the problem, what part do the moral instincts play in the general system of human society, which is itself part of the wider system of the world in which we live? And this brings us back to a proposition from which I started. For, in fact, it is obvious that the variation in moral beliefs which presented itself as a great difficulty must be a part of the problem to be solved. We have not to consider a number of different and irreconcilable opinions held by equally competent persons, and to strike a rough balance between them, and arbitrarily exclude some from a hearing. We musk ask, in fact, what is the cause of these opinions, which, again, is something very different from the reason as perceived by those who hold them. The evolution of opinion is part of the whole evolution; and it may appear upon further investigation that opinions which present themselves as radically opposed, are, when properly considered, nothing more than the partial views of the truth which have commended themselves to persons under different conditions. The true law of belief will account for the erroneous as well as for the accurate opinions. If the evolution of moral sentiment is a work in which many minds in many generations co-operate, it is plain that the opinions held at any given period will correspond in some way to the

corresponding stage of evolution, and that the variation will appear not as arbitrary but as confirming the general law.

29. It must be the work of the following chapters to give more precision to these general remarks. One observation, however, must be premised, of which I have had to feel the importance. Starting, as I profess to do, from the scientific point of view, it follows that I have to deal, in the first place, with facts of observation. I have, that is, to consider the moral sentiments which have, as a historical fact, exercised an influence in the world, and to ask what part they play in the general process of evolution. I have, therefore, nothing to do, in the first instance, with those moral principles which are or profess to be deduced from transcendental considerations or from pure logic independent of any particular fact. The distinction, which cannot be fully considered at this stage, is one which must yet be noticed, because I am convinced that a neglect of it leads to a vast amount of ambiguity and misunderstanding. That there is, upon any theory, a great difference between actual and ideal morality, I take to be an admitted fact. In any given society there are, as a rule, several moral standards: there is that which is taught in churches; that—not always identical—which actually determines our approval or disapproval; that which is current in the most cultivated, and that which is held by the most barbarous classes; that which is approved by the advanced thinkers, and that which commends itself to the thoroughgoing conservatives, and so forth. The difference is universally allowed to exist. The utilitarian moralist considers that to be moral which makes for happiness, but he admits that the average calculation of happiness is often very wrong. His opponent holds that moral principles are deducible from pure reason, but he admits that most men are very poor hands at pure reasoning. Perhaps he appeals to the voice of conscience, but he does not assert that the voice is not capable of misinterpretation. The distinction is recognised on all hands, but the ordinary mode of recognition leads to much confusion. Each man thinks that his own morality is the right morality, and that the ordinary standard is mistaken and immoral so far as it deflects from it. He does

not say that your morality is erroneous, but denies it to be morality at all. I do not object at present to this mode of speech, but it may lead to misunderstanding. Thus, for example, one moralist asserts that the moral code varies, whilst another says that it is fixed. Yet they may, and sometimes do, mean the very same thing; for both may allow that the actual code varies, and both may agree that, if men were better reasoners or better calculators of happiness, the code would be fixed: the variability is predicated of the actual, the fixity of the ideal code. Thus the question of what ought to be moral (if I may be allowed the phrase) is often confused with the question of what actually is moral. The various controversies as to international law illustrate the confusion. When a writer holds that a certain custom ought to be observed by different nations, he at once declares that it is the law. He attributes to it a kind of potential existence, though he allows that it is not actually operative. His opponent denies it to be the law, because he gives that name only to laws which are actually observed, though he may be willing to admit that it is desirable that it should be the law. A similar misunderstanding perplexes many problems in casuistry. So, for example, we ask what judgment we are to form of conduct which is 'materially' wrong but 'formally' right; or, as the words are sometimes interpreted, of conduct which is in conformity with the moral law as accepted by the agent, but not in conformity with right morality. A man deserts his wife, sincerely believing that marriage should not be permanently binding. Such cases are often perplexing; and at present I have only to remark that the perplexity is increased by the ambiguity in question. If we understand that by *right* we mean right according to the ideal code, and if the ideal code—however constructed—implies indissolubility of marriage, then the man clearly acts wrongly. We may still ask whether his non-recognition of the true principle makes his conduct better or worse; whether a man who knowingly breaks the law from conviction is better or worse than a man who breaks it unknowingly? This, in my opinion, amounts to asking which man would, on the whole, observe the genuine moral code with

fewest exceptions. And this, again, is a question of fact to be settled by psychologists and direct observation. If, on the other hand, by *right* we mean simply conformity to the moral code which is actually operative at the given time, it is simply a question of fact whether that code does or does not prescribe indissolubility of marriage. The further question then remains, whether the new rule upon which the man acts is a better or a worse rule than the accepted rule? And this is to ask whether it would or would not form a part of the ideal code, however that is to be constructed? The problem is then of necessity complicated, but it becomes hopelessly perplexed when we have not settled as to the sense in which we use the word *moral*, for the man may be right in one of the senses and wrong in the other.

30. It is desirable to avoid this ambiguity as much as possible; and therefore I give notice of the fact that, until I state the contrary, I wish to be understood as referring in all cases to the actual law. I mean by the moral code that set of rules which, as a matter of fact, is respected in a given society, and so far determines the ordinary approvals and disapprovals as to be an effective force in governing conduct. It will be an important inquiry at a future period, what is the relation of this to the ideal code, and what it precisely is that I understand by the ideal code. I mention the fact explicitly, because I think that few ambiguities in the whole inquiry have been more fruitful of misunderstanding.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORY OF MOTIVES

### I. *The Problem*

1. Ethical speculation must, as thus understood, be implicated in psychological and sociological inquiries—that is to say, its foundations must be laid in the treacherous region where the vague doctrines of common sense have not yet crystallised into scientific coherence. Perplexing ambiguities beset the simplest primary propositions. We accept from the language of ordinary life some statement which serves well enough for a working maxim. As soon as we apply it to purposes of accurate inquiry, we find that it says too much or too little—that it causes a hopeless ambiguity or pushes an undeniable truth into obvious error. We are trying to split hairs with a carving-knife. We must, therefore, look closely to our initial steps, and scrutinise some apparently obvious and harmless propositions.

2. We have to deal with human conduct. So far as a man is a material thing, his conduct, if it can properly be called conduct, is determined by purely mechanical conditions; so far as he is a sentient being, his feelings, and so far as he is a rational being, his reasoning powers, must be taken into account. We are already in presence of a difficulty. How are we to conceive of the relation between reason and feeling, or of the relations between the vital and the mechanical forces? As we understand these words, in one sense or another, we find ourselves impelled towards one of the two opposite poles to which all ethical speculations converge. According to the principles already stated, we must distinguish between the scientific and the underlying metaphysical problems. The

metaphysical are, for my purpose, irrelevant. I do not, for example, enter into the discussion between the materialist and the idealist. The materialist regards man as an automaton worked by mechanical forces, which, according to him, are the sole realities, and considers consciousness to be in some sort a superfluous spectator. Without discussing the tenability of such a theory, I take it for granted that pains and pleasures have an influence upon human conduct; that men eat because they are hungry, strike because they are angry, and act upon reasoned plans because they have certain convictions as to the nature of the world and the consequences of their actions. The materialist may show, if he can, that all the processes thus described have a mechanical aspect; that hunger corresponds to certain organic states which involve certain cerebral changes, transforming impulses received from the nervous system into messages determining mechanical changes in the various organs of the body. In any case, however, we are in complete darkness as to the nature of these mechanical changes, and are long likely so to remain; and, moreover, in any case—according to my contention—a statement of them will not supersede the other mode of statement. The proposition, that is, that hunger makes men eat will express a truth whatever material implications may be involved in that simple statement. The ultimate reality may be something different, but at least the formula gives, and, so far as I can see, is always likely to give, an intelligible and simple account of the facts. And the same will be true if we adopt the opposite theory of idealism, and in some sense deny reality to the mechanical entities called brain and stomach and food. They may be simply clusters of sensations, but the formula will still express a relation which will hold good as to their reciprocal action. We have to inquire what is the most general formula of this kind discoverable.

## II. *The Emotions as Determining Conduct*

3. After emerging from the purely metaphysical regions, we have still to look carefully to our footing. Conduct, I have

said, is determined by feeling; we fly from pain; we seek pleasure; life is a continuous struggle to minimise suffering and to lay a firm grasp upon happiness; 'good' means everything which favours happiness, and 'bad' everything that is conducive to misery: nor can any other intelligible meaning be assigned to the words. To some minds these propositions appear to be self-evident; they cannot be denied without self-contradiction; the difficulty of proving them is the difficulty of proving any of those primary doctrines for which we must appeal to what is called the direct testimony of consciousness. Yet, in laying them down, I have already made assertions which seem to beg the question, and the appeal to consciousness may be rejected as virtually an appeal to common sense, or, in other words, to unreasoning prejudice. I shall, however, venture to assume that the assertions are in some sense valid; and I make that assumption upon the ground already taken—the ground, namely, that no metaphysician would really deny that they express truths, though he may deny that they express ultimate truths. The only real question is in what sense they are valid. Nobody who has ever had a toothache—nobody, one might rather say, who has ever had a sensation—will deny that he avoids pain as such and seeks pleasure as such. And, in fact, if we examine the ordinary criticisms of these simple propositions, we shall find that the critics deny not so much the propositions themselves as certain interpretations which tacitly introduce some further and more questionable assertion.

4. Thus, for example, it is frequently admitted that pain deters and pleasure attracts, but it is at the same time denied that pain and pleasure are the sole deterrent or attractive qualities. We shrink from fire or the knife, but some other motive may overpower our spontaneous dread. What, then, is the nature of this different motive? It must, by the argument, be something which admits of a comparison with pain and pleasure, which has its equivalent in terms of feeling, and which represents, therefore, a force of the same order. Is this not virtually to admit that it is still a pleasure or a pain? The dread of shame or remorse overcomes the martyr's dread

of the fire. Is not that because shame and remorse are themselves painful, and in some men more exquisitely painful than physical torment? The pain and pleasure may be higher in kind, but it is still a pleasure or a pain. The true statement is that one emotion may be overcome, not by a something which is altogether disparate from emotion, but by an emotion of a different kind; and this is of course indisputable. It does not traverse the proposition that emotion can be limited by nothing but emotion. Or, again, the conclusion is sometimes evaded by showing, not that pain or pleasure do not determine conduct, but that conduct is not determined by certain modes of estimating pain and pleasure. A man, it is often said, may deliberately prefer a life of pain to annihilation, and in so doing he would choose a clear balance of painful sensation. But if we look closer, this is simply to say that the prospect of annihilation is more painful at the moment than the prospect of future misery. This, indeed, is highly probable. The instinct which revolts against the thought of annihilation is so powerful that the imagination of future evils is unable to overcome it. Perhaps this proves that the instinct is a foolish one; but who ever denied that we had foolish instincts—instincts, that is, which lead us to sacrifice a great future to a small present pleasure, or to choose an evil rather than make the effort to wield the bare bodkin? All that is proved is that we are not always determined by a calculation of pleasure to come; or, again, that the estimate of future pleasure does not always produce a corresponding pleasure; and this will be admitted on all hands.

5. We have to meet these objections by the sacrifice of much of the apparent import of our statement. We are compelled to widen the significance of our words until we admit every conceivable form of agreeable or disagreeable feeling; and we are forced to allow that pain and pleasure may determine us to act so as in the long-run to sacrifice happiness and court misery. And hence arises another, and in some ways a more formidable, criticism. Granting, it is said, that happiness is the sole aim of all human conduct, what are we the wiser? The proposition is valueless unless universally

true; and if universally true, it is nugatory. Happiness is known to us solely as that which men desire: to say, then, that they desire happiness is to say that they desire what they desire. The force of this familiar argument is undeniable. The proposition, I agree, is nothing if not universal; it must cover all the actions of all human beings, at every moment of their lives and throughout their whole range of conscious motive; it must be equally true of our sensual appetites, our purest emotions, and our intellectual activities. Happiness guides us when we are eating our dinners, or studying metaphysics, or feeding the hungry; when we sacrifice all prospects of future happiness to the loftiest or to the most grovelling motives; when we destroy our health and ruin our families for a glass of gin, or walk up to a battery to buy one more chance of victory for a good cause. The love of happiness must express the sole possible motive of Judas Iscariot and his Master; it must explain the conduct of Stylites on his column, of Tiberius at Capreæ, of A Kempis in his cell, and of Nelson in the cockpit of the *Victory*. It must be equally good for saints, martyrs, heroes, cowards, debauchees, ascetics, mystics, cynics, misers, prodigals, men, women, and babes in arms. Truly it must be an elastic principle. Can it be more than this that men, so far as they act from motives, have some motives for their action?

6. I admit that the proposition is one which would have been scarcely worth an explicit assertion had it not been explicitly denied. But it is not an empty proposition. It asserts, in the first place, the general proposition already laid down, that human actions are no more the product of chance than any other observable phenomena. But beyond this, it makes another assertion which it is essential to bear in mind. To assert, in fact, that the quality of any conscious state in respect of its pain or pleasure is the essential condition of its being desired or dreaded, is to deny that the condition of conduct can be found in anything which has no relation to pain or pleasure. And as attempts have been made to find the condition elsewhere, it becomes necessary to deny the possibility of their success. To say that action is determined

by feeling is not to enable us to determine which particular feeling will be most efficient. As the statement is true of all motives, it throws no light upon the relation between different motives. Nor, again, does it lead us to any fertile proposition as to the nature of conduct in general. Pain and pleasure are words which it is impossible to define; as they are names of the highest class and not a species of some more general class, we can no more define them by genus and difference than we can define light and darkness, or subject and object, or past and future: but we can still know what they mean; and it is conceivable that we might be able to assign the physiological conditions of their existence, in which case we might be able to advance to some fertile conclusions from a statement which is at present nugatory by its excessive generality. At present, we can only say that psychologists distinguish—and their distinction has at least a scientific if not a metaphysical validity—between the emotions and the intellect, or between feeling and reasoning. We assert that conduct is determined by the feelings, not as denying that it is also in some sense determined by the reason, but as maintaining that a state of consciousness which is neither painful nor pleasurable cannot be an object either of desire or aversion, and that, so far as it is painful or pleasurable, it will produce one or the other. We shall, I think, see that this doctrine, however vague, is by no means without an important bearing upon ethical speculation; but it also suggests the necessity of entering more fully into the meaning of the distinction in question. Since, as I have said, man is both a sentient and a reasoning being, we have to ask how we are to conceive of the mode in which these separable, or at least verbally distinguishable, faculties co-operate in determining conduct. The inquiry will lead to a fuller answer to the difficulties upon which I have briefly touched in the last paragraph.

7. Moralists who regard happiness as the sole aim of all conceivable action have accepted a simple analysis of reasoned conduct. Conduct, as the old reasoners said, followed the 'last act of the judgment.' Though men frequently, perhaps generally, act without much conscious choice, the typical and

fully developed act of decision consisted in a judgment that one action would produce more happiness than another. The intellect, to use the ordinary metaphor, weighed different 'lots' of happiness in its balance; the will inevitably inclined to that conduct which weighed the heaviest in these scales. Reasoned conduct differed from merely instinctive conduct in that it implied an adaptation of means to ends, and therefore a possibility of following courses of conduct not agreeable in themselves, but promising a greater total of happiness. The characteristic of the reasoning being was the power of acting with a view to distant ends, instead of being the slave of immediate impulse. Now I do not deny that it may be possible to use this phraseology so as to express the facts with tolerable accuracy. But I think that it is apt to sanction certain erroneous hypotheses which have done much to perplex the whole subject.

8. We may have to consider some of these hereafter. For the present I may observe that at the very outset there is apparently one defect in the statement. It seems to assume that a deferred pleasure is as potent as an immediate pleasure. So long as 'I' am to have the pleasure, it matters not, so far as we have gone, whether it be the 'I' of to-day or the 'I' of next year. The influence of mental perspective appears therefore to be entirely ignored; and yet there can be no doubt, so long as we are dealing with facts, that this influence is of the highest importance, and that every removal of a pleasure in time and place has an immense effect upon its power of determining conduct. But if we try to rectify our formula so as to allow for this difficulty, we become aware that it is of the very essence of the statement. The happiness which determines the will is always regarded as future, though it may be in the immediate future. The normal state of man is that of the proverbial ass, who constantly pursues and never obtains the wisp of hay fixed at the end of the shaft. The popular maxim, 'Man never is, but always to be blest,' is converted into a scientific formula. Conduct, you say, is always determined by feeling; but the doctrine consistently applied is fatal to the analysis assumed. For on this analysis, reason, regarded as a faculty altogether distinct from the

emotions, determines conduct by reference to a feeling which does not yet exist, or, in other words, does not exist at all. The actual feeling is taken to be a mere consequent which does not affect conduct. The feeling which is hereafter to be is the sole determining influence.

9. To express ourselves accurately, and to carry out consistently our initial assumption, we must modify the statement. No feeling can affect us except so far as it is felt. An unfelt feeling is a nonentity. Many of our feelings, it is true, are regarded by us as prophetic foretastes of a feeling to come. We shudder at the edge of a cliff because we foresee the consequences of a fall, and thus the shudder implies the belief in those consequences. But though this intellectual perception is an essential part of the process, it would not affect our conduct if it were a perception entirely divorced from feeling. It affects us because the perception is itself painful, because it involves an anticipatory realisation of an approaching pain. It is more accurate to say that my conduct is determined by the pleasantest judgment than to say that it is determined by my judgment of what is pleasantest. And though in such cases the remark may seem to be hypercritical, and one formula to be equivalent to the other, there are many cases of the highest importance in which it is essential to any intelligible account of the process. A man, for example, acts in a given way under the influence of vanity. Although he knows that he would be happier in the long-run if he abandoned some burdensome honour, his self-esteem nails him to his post. He is governed by the instantaneous feeling, by the immediate sense that a resignation would expose him to ridicule or contempt. And though this generally includes a foretaste of future suffering, he is influenced by the actual painfulness of the choice, not by the belief that he is choosing something which will produce pain. This is equally true of all the feelings which we may roughly call æsthetic feelings—feelings which contain no special reference to the future, but which are prompted by immediate perception. The same, again, may be said of a large class of actions which seem puzzling to many observers, and which is conveniently illustrated by the case of

games. When we speak of conduct as determined by the pursuit of ends, it seems to be contradictory that a man should take a keen pleasure in the pursuit of an end admittedly trifling, the slaughter, for example, of a fox, or the solution of a conundrum. The true explanation, however, seems to be different. The pleasure of a game, speaking generally, is the pleasure of a discharge of accumulated energy. We are 'bored,' that is, we suffer a painful sensation, if we do nothing when we are in vigorous health, and therefore we receive pleasure in doing anything, even if that anything brings us no additional pleasure in itself. The so-called end is pleasant simply because the pursuit affords a convenient pretext for a regulated discharge of energy. The life and death of a fox is absolutely indifferent; the exercise of the powers necessary for catching and killing him may be momentarily delightful. The stimulus comes from within, not from without; from a change in our state, not from a change in our circumstances. We might try to describe the difference by distinguishing between 'subjective' and 'objective' ends. In some cases, we should then say, we wish to relieve our feelings; in others, to bring about some state of things which does not at present affect our feelings. The distinction would be erroneous, because every end must be at once objective and subjective. It must be objective, because in all cases our conduct has certain objective consequences: that is, consequences other than a state of our own consciousness; and it must be subjective, because it cannot be an end unless we desire it. But the distinction corresponds to a real difference. In every case of rational action we foresee a certain set of consequences as dependent upon our conduct. The 'intention' of the agent is defined by these foreseen consequences. His 'end' is defined by that part of the foreseen consequences which he actually desires, and the end defines the 'motive,' that is, the feeling, which actually determines conduct. Now it is true that in some cases the immediate feeling is all that is consciously operative, and we care comparatively little for the consequences in any other relation, though we may distinctly foresee them, and even call them our end. In other cases, on the contrary, the conduct is

only adopted in view of certain pleasures to be obtained hereafter. But even in that case we adopt it because the foretaste of the pleasure is itself pleasurable. We like the labour which is to bear fruit hereafter. Hence we easily speak of ends in the latter case, because we overlook the existing pleasure which exists only as a foretaste of the future pleasure, whilst in the former case the reference to an end seems to involve a desire for an end not in itself desirable. In fact, however, though one element or the other may be more or less prominent, though the motive may be more easily definable in objective or subjective language, and the pleasure be dependent or independent upon the representation of future states of feeling, the two elements must always be present, and the motive be an actually existing feeling.

10. I think, then, that the metaphor of the balance is misleading, and that the conception to which it corresponds leads to many fallacies. It is misleading because it implies an erroneous analysis, and separates different aspects of a single process, as though they were different processes succeeding each other in time instead of being mutually involved. The intellect and the emotion are in reality related as form and substance, and cannot be really divided. To judge of pleasures is to feel the pleasures themselves, or to feel representative pleasures. The process is at once feeling and thinking, and may be regarded from either point of view. The emotion is something determinate, and therefore its logical formula may be given, but the logic without the feeling would be a mere blank nonentity, a form without substance. This is equally overlooked when we regard the pleasure as a kind of independent thing which the intellect weighs and measures, or whether we try to resolve it into a perception instead of regarding it as bound up in the perception. It seems to me, for example, inaccurate to say that vanity *is* the belief that we are superior to our neighbours. It is equally inaccurate to say that it is a pleasure which results from that belief as a consequent in time following an antecedent. It is the emotional side of a process which, upon its intellectual side, is a belief; it is a feeling evolved by bringing together in certain ways a

perception of our own qualities and those of our neighbours, and implies equally a conviction and an emotion.

11. Falling back, then, upon the original principle, I repeat that pain and pleasure are, according to me, the determining causes of action. It may even be said that they are the sole and the ultimate causes. They are the sole causes in this sense, that where two courses of conduct are otherwise possible, and the choice of one depends upon the agent's own decision, his will is always determined by the actual painfulness or pleasantness of the choice at the moment of choosing, and that there is no different kind of motive. They are ultimate in this sense, that it is impossible to analyse pain and pleasure into any simpler elements. We might conceivably find the physiological causes of pain and pleasure ; we might show, that is, that each state corresponded to certain organic conditions ; but such a discovery, however important, would not alter the fact that the pain and pleasure are the immediate causes of conduct, and that they admit of no further analysis from the subjective point of view, whatever may be the physical correlates. We may, again, investigate the historical causes of the pain and pleasure : that is, we may trace the previous stages through which the sentient being has come to be what it is. But this, though again a most interesting inquiry, would not alter the fact that at the given moment the feelings, being such as they are, determine the conduct. If we could analyse, in short, the forces which maintain the existing order, the feelings considered as painful or pleasurable would represent the ultimate elements in the analysis. Any attempt to analyse further only lands us in contradiction and confusion. The fact that any state of consciousness is painful, is so far a sufficient reason for avoiding it—a reason which may be overpowered by others, and which may in its turn admit of explanation ; but so far as it goes, it represents a true cause, and one which must always operate. I admit that so far as the act of choice implies a weighing of pains and pleasures, the pains and pleasures are always repellent and attractive, and the sole measure of the repulsion and attraction. I only deny that this gives an adequate account of the intimate nature of the process.

12. How, then, must we conceive of the mode of action of these forces? The most obvious fact seems to me to be that in all cases pain as pain represents tension, a state of feeling, that is, from which there is a tendency to change; pleasure represents so far equilibrium, or a state in which there is a tendency to persist. Some such statement represents most nearly the characteristic of all emotional states, from the lowest upwards. The worm writhes on the hook, and we inevitably interpret the writhing as indicative of agony. The mind (if I may say so) writhes under a painful emotion. It makes an effort to writhe into some more tolerable posture. Fear implies an effort to get away from the painful state of anticipated pain, and as it becomes intense, the spasmodic struggle becomes so desperate as to render any definite action impossible, even though we know that our only hope lies in cool and regulated effort. The pain of continuous illness produces a restlessness, a vague unguided effort to secure some change, even though no specific change presents itself as desirable. Similar remarks might of course be made about the inverse case of content and satisfaction. When I choose I go through a process of a complex but still similar kind. Two modes of feeling are more or less distinctly present to my mind. Each is recognised perhaps as the foretaste of a feeling about to become actual. So far as my power of volition goes, I am decided by the relative painfulness or pleasurableness. I try each mode ideally, and settle down into that which is on the whole the easiest. What in the actual feeling is the 'writhing' and spasmodic struggle is, in the representative feeling, a difficulty in admitting the suggested course of conduct. When I am satisfied, my mind acquiesces and slides into that mode of action which causes the least disturbance.

13. The analogy which naturally offers itself and seems to give the best account of the facts is the mechanical principle of least resistance. A body under the influence of several forces moves in that direction in which the resultant of the opposing forces is a minimum. Similarly the various desires operate in such a way that the volition discharges itself along



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that line in which the balance of pleasure over pain is a maximum. The pleasurable state is one of stable, the painful one of unstable equilibrium. Alter the conditions slightly in the latter case, and the agent spontaneously adopts a new attitude, like a spring relieved from pressure. Alter them in the first case, and there is a tendency to revert to the previous state. In one case we have a body balanced on a ridge by external forces, and ready to fall at once if the supports be removed; in the other we have a body so balanced that after a slight change it will always tend to fall back to the original position. It is, perhaps, not superfluous to remark, in order to avoid possible misconstruction, that the volition may exercise a very small influence, even when the limiting conditions are in great part ideal. The more painful is not necessarily the less permanent condition. It is one in which there is an additional chance against permanence. A painful thought may fascinate the attention. Terror sets up, as I have said, so disturbed a condition that the mind cannot settle into any definite course: the hand shakes when it would aim the necessary blow. To determine even the subjective conditions of conduct we have to consider the fascination as well as the mere painfulness and pleasurableness of the emotions. We can no more alter arbitrarily the circumstances of our microcosm than of the external world. The painful thought cannot be included simply as painful if it excites an intense emotion and is associated by many links with all our habitual objects of thought, even though we may know that the pain cannot suggest a remedy. It is as difficult to avoid brooding over vain regret as to evade a physical constraint. The will becomes paralysed, and the brave man feels that the best course is to face the pain till his sensibility becomes deadened by persistent familiarity.

14. To explain the theory fully it would thus be necessary to consider the sphere of volition, or to analyse what, according to one theory, is called an act of Free Will. I have to make some simple choice, say, between a glass of wine and a glass of water. The process, according to me, consists essentially in rehearsing the two modes of conduct which present

themselves to my mind. I am moved by the foretaste of the pleasure of drinking, the difficulty of reaching either glass, the dislike to expense, the moral and medical scruples in which I indulge, and so forth; and the decision takes place according to the principle of least resistance. To analyse all the operative motives may be impossible even in so simple a case; to weigh and compare their importance in general terms may be impossible; but in any case, I decide by the simple process of feeling one course to be the easiest. It often happens that each course will be the easiest if it happens to be the one most directly contemplated; and it will in that case be a matter of chance—that is, it will depend upon other circumstances than my will—whether I take the wine or the water. If now I am desirous to know what will be the result of some process entirely independent of my volition—say, the choice of another person in the same case—I shall equally rehearse all approaching signs of events. But in the latter case my mind works automatically upon the data provided. It takes certain facts, arranges them according to logical rules, and brings out a conclusion which does not follow with more or less certainty because the result is painful or pleasurable. My volition determines, of course, whether I shall or shall not reason. If I choose to reason, I apply a fixed rule which (if rightly applied) brings out a fixed conclusion. One and only one result can follow from the one set of data. In the other case, my intellect shows two courses to be equally possible. The sequence of events which terminates in wine is as consistent with all the facts as the sequence which terminates in water. One of the series then follows by introducing the additional fact that it is the pleasantest. I may say that it follows because I know or perceive it to be the pleasantest. But this, as I have explained, seems to me to be a roundabout way of saying that I feel it to be pleasantest, or, more simply, that it is the pleasantest to me; for the knowledge is here the very same thing as the feeling in a reflective mind; or, if knowledge be used in a wider sense to include the represented feeling, the feeling is the fundamental fact, and the knowledge the reflected feeling. We may then say that in this case the

prediction fulfils itself. In the other case, I foresee a fact because it is about to happen. In this case, it is about to happen because I foresee it. My anticipation is the essential condition of its happening; and in this case the foresight becomes a volition.

15. The believer in free will (according to me) misinterprets these facts. The foresight of events is of the same nature in the two cases up to a certain point, and at that point a further condition is required in one case which does not apply in the other. As this condition depends upon the person who foresees, it appears to be arbitrary, although in fact it is simply an expression of his constitution. When we see another man about to act, we assume his taste to be one of the data, and calculate his action as we calculate any other future event. When it is our own, we fancy in some obscure sense that it is in our power that it should exist, or not exist, and therefore regard the whole decision as arbitrary. I do not wish, however, to dwell upon this argument, but to point out another fact which is sometimes neglected—the difficulty we have in drawing the distinction between the two kinds of foresight accordingly. Slow experience teaches us what is the true sphere of volition. Our prevision of our own conduct is exceedingly fallible. Nothing is easier than to mistake wishes for anticipations and dislikes for disbelief. A perfectly logical mind would draw conclusions unbiassed by pain and pleasure. The hatred of error would overbalance the painfulness of anticipation. Its emotions would decide it to add up its accounts; but they would be unable to persuade it that two and two make five. But nothing is easier than to find a mind which never permits its anticipations to intrude beyond their proper sphere. The logical mill once set going must grind out results irrespective of their pain or pleasure; but we dread to set it going or tamper with its action. We are apt, in vulgar phrase, to 'cook' our accounts. The reluctance of the mind to gaze upon painful facts prevents us from setting the sum precisely: and as we tamper with the materials at every stage of the process, we end with that mass of contradictions and baseless prejudices which we know

as human beliefs. It is only by long experience, in short, that we learn what are the predictions which can fulfil themselves, and those which have no effect upon the future. If it is still hard to resist the illusion that a thing will happen because we desire it, it is intelligible how all the religions which are rooted in early stages of mental development sanction the propensity to hold that fate can be conquered by will, and that prayers—the embodiment of desires—can govern the stars in their courses. Anticipation and volition spring from the same root, and it is by a very gradual and difficult process that we learn to assign to each its proper sphere in our mental operations.

16. The difficulty of knowing what we desire is as great as the difficulty of estimating the efficacy of our desires. The play of motive is beyond measure complicated. We may meet even with apparently contradictory cases, such as the apparent delight of many people in contemplating the darkest probabilities. The full explanation must be left to psychologists. It is partly perhaps that there is an actual pain in trying to reconcile the belief in a particular form of good fortune with a general reputation of evil. It requires a painful effort to shake off doubts and fears which have become familiar. More frequently perhaps it is the shrinking by anticipation from the shock, so trying to a sensitive nature, which follows the disturbance of a pleasant dream ; we would rather have bad dreams than encounter the possible jar of a sudden awakening ; or vanity, for some reason, makes the effort to throw off the painful emotion still more painful than persistence ; or perhaps, most frequently, we are simply making a convenient pretext for a display of bad temper or melancholy which has been generated by some other cause. To follow out such arguments would lead me too far. I must conclude this discussion by repeating once more the main conclusion which I have sought to establish ; for it seems to me that a clear theory of ethics can only be attained by a clear understanding of a proposition which, as misunderstood, contains the germs of countless fallacies.

17. The true proposition, then, that conduct is determined

by the feelings, has been constantly confounded with the erroneous proposition that it is determined by the agent's judgment of his happiness. This is expressed in the form that the will is determined by a kind of syllogism. The major premiss is invariably—I will adopt the course of conduct which will produce the greatest balance of happiness. I am unable to admit the accuracy of this statement, although I do not deny that in many cases it is an approximate statement of the case. So far from admitting the second proposition to be an expansion of the first, I hold them to be really inconsistent. The feeling which determines conduct is not a judgment at all, though it is inseparably bound up with serious judgments. It is a simple unanalysable fact. If we would, not define, but describe the feeling in other words, we should rather call it a psychical force. Love and hatred, desire and aversion, determine our conduct as physical forces determine the movements of a body. They have a definite more or less ascertainable value, of which we can form a judgment, but which is not itself a judgment. The sense of fatigue, for example, puts an absolute limit upon my energies, and implies no direct reference to any future pains or pleasure. It is there in such and such a degree, and we can say no more about it. It is, or may be, the subjective correlate of certain objective phenomena which might be described in terms of nervous force, muscular tension, and so forth, and is equally definite in its relations. The same is equally true with all the direct emotions and sensations. They are what they are, and underlie all judgments, instead of being a product of those judgments. The possibility of forming any judgment as to future pains or pleasures presupposes their existence as the existence of forces is presupposed in calculating their actions and reactions. So far, again, there is no ground for supposing that our pains and pleasures are in any way regulated with a view to future enjoyments or sufferings. This consideration begins to suggest itself so far as our immediate pains and pleasures are recognised as foretastes of pains and pleasures to come. In that case, which is, of course, more or less the case of nearly all the actions of reasoning beings, the actual enjoyment, and

therefore the conduct, is more or less affected by our previsions of the future. A secondary action is set up which tends to regulate the play of the passions. It may happen, but, so far as we have gone, it may also not happen, that the passions may be so regulated that the conduct dictated by our immediate feelings may coincide with that which would be dictated by a judgment of our total happiness. And this leads us to the next problem to be attacked. We can only be affected by the prospect of the future in so far as we are reasoning beings. We must, therefore, consider in what sense the mere blind action of immediate feeling is governed and regulated by the reason ; for the principles hitherto considered do not imply a conscious regard to general rules. A man's action at each point is determined by his feelings, and therefore his whole course depends upon the varying feeling, or, in other words, upon its law. But this is equally true of man and beast, and does not show what is implied in the acceptance of a general rule.

### III. *The Reason as Determining Conduct*

18. We have therefore to consider in what sense the conduct of every man is determined by his reason. I must begin by taking note of one obvious but important distinction. There is a sense in which we all admit that the universe is reasonable throughout—the sense, namely, in which we simply assert the validity of the universal postulate ; a sense in which there is no distinction in point of reasonableness between the fall of a stone and the working of a logician's brain. As we rise from the inorganic to the organic, and again from the lowest to the highest organism, the working formula, if I may give that name to what is generally called the law of the phenomena, becomes continually more complex, and soon surpasses all our powers of statement. Every conceivable event is, however, in this sense reasonable ; which is only to endorse once more the familiar assertion that chance is but a name for ignorance. In this sense, again, no conduct could be more or less 'reasonable' than any other. The most

foolish vagaries of the most illogical mind have their cause, and would be explained if we could look into the mind of the agent. The errors of the puzzleheaded have their 'reason' as much as the soundest judgments of the clearest thinker. It is plain, therefore, that we must use the word in a different sense when we make it the basis of a distinction between one thing and another. When we say that the conduct of Plato is reasonable, and that the dog or the stone acts instinctively or mechanically, we mean that Plato has a mind capable of apprehending a general rule, and carrying on certain logical processes, and that these circumstances determine his conduct. He is a conscious and reasoning subject as well as an object; and the distinction might perhaps be expressed by saying, that whereas every conceivable phenomenon is objectively reasonable, or, in the common phrase, has an assignable 'law,' intelligent beings alone are subjectively reasonable, or determined in their conduct by perceptions and inferences. In this latter sense men may be reasonable or unreasonable in the most varying degrees. In the former, the unreasonable is the contradictory, or, in other words, the non-existent.

19. Taking reason, then, in the only sense in which it affords a basis of distinction, we shall find, I think, that conduct is generally called reasonable in several connected but not identical senses. Sometimes we are told that a man is reasonable in so far as his reason controls his passions. The reason is a separate faculty which in some way rules or supplants the other faculties. A man, again, may be called reasonable so far as he possesses the faculty in a high degree, as he apprehends certain general rules, and as they affect his conduct; and this, again, may imply, on the one hand, that he reasons accurately, and so has conceptions of the world corresponding to the reality, or, on the other hand, that his judgment of what is most desirable is fixed and consistent. In this, too, it is implied that he acts in such a way as really to bring about what he desires, or that he knows how to proportion means to ends. And, finally, we may mean something beyond all this: namely, that his ultimate ends are 'reasonable' or worthy in some sense not yet defined. Reason,

in short, may be opposed to passion or to want of thought, or to want of proportion between mean and ends, or may indicate consistency and loftiness of purpose. The animal, the man of sudden and incontrollable impulse, the simple dunce, or the consistent and calculating man who yet aims at some purely sensual or selfish end, may each be called unreasonable. In trying to answer the question before us, what, namely, are the characteristics of reasoned as distinguished from unreasoned action? we shall incidentally consider these various senses.

20. The supposed conflict between reason and passion is, as I hold, meaningless if it is taken to imply that the reason is a faculty separate from the emotions, and contemplating them as an external spectator. Reasoning and feeling are, according to me, bound together in an inseparable unity. Every act of choice is a struggle between passions involving more or less reasoning, but not resolvable into an emotionless process. The man who is distracted between the charms of gin and duty is not divided between passion and reason, but between a sensual pleasure and the love of home, or the fear of hell, or the disgust of conscious degradation. If resistance to one emotion gave him no pain he would not resist the other. There must be emotion on both sides, as well as reason on both sides, or a struggle would be impossible. It may be that a reasonable man is more likely than an unreasonable to resist the temptation to drunkenness—that is, that the greater the development of the reasoning faculties the less the love of gin—as the inverse proposition is pretty generally true. But this is a very different statement, and points to a different process of indisputable reality. Reason, in short, whatever its nature, is the faculty which enables us to act with a view to the distant and the future. Consequently, in so far as a man is reasonable, he is under the influence of motives which would not be otherwise operative. The immediate bodily appetite is held in check by a number of motives to which only the reasoning being is accessible. His mind's eye sees not only the public-house but the absent wife. The reason so far leads a man to multiply the data from which his

conduct is calculable, or the more reasonable a man may be the greater the variety of ways in which his feelings will be interested.

21. The impression, however, which leads us to oppose feeling to reason is partly due to another fact. A large part of our conduct is automatic; it is either not determined by conscious motives, or it is determined by motives which, though they rise for a moment to the surface of consciousness, are forgotten as soon as felt. Of our conscious conduct, again, part may be called instinctive and part reasonable, according as the motive does or does not include some reference to ulterior ends. These modes of action pass into each other by imperceptible degrees. We say that the bird building a nest acts instinctively, meaning to deny that it has any view of the consequences, and to assert that it builds because the act of building is in itself pleasant or the not building painful. A man may, in the same way, eat his dinner instinctively, that is without contemplating the consequences to his health, and the same act may be reasoned when those consequences are taken into account; when, for example, he eats purposely to gain strength for a special contingency. The instinct may be converted into reason as the consequences become manifest, and the reasoned action become instinctive as the consequences are left out of account. So, again, the instinctive action becomes automatic when it is done without leaving any trace upon consciousness. It may still be voluntary in the sense that the agent may be able to refrain if his attention happens to be aroused. Habitual actions pass through all these gradations. We do a thing first with some conscious motive; we come to do it without reference to other consequences, and even without consciousness; and the difference is, that whereas the action previously required some effort, it now requires an effort to refrain from the action. We are like a man walking in chains, who forgets their existence until something leads him to diverge from the line imposed, and consequently to be galled by the restraint. The motive is thus a latent force which only manifests itself in consciousness under some opposing action.

22. Let us now return to our gin-drinker. He feels the desire, we may suppose, but the desire is instantly quenched by the bare thought, say, of duty, or of the injury to his family. We say, in popular language, that his passion has been quelled by reason. The mere intellectual perception, however, could have no effect if the sense of duty and love of family did not represent a strong fund of emotion capable of being called into vigorous operation. His conscience or his family affections have generated a habit. He has become an intellectual automaton. He acts by a certain rule without calling into active play the feelings by which the habit was originally generated. It now requires an effort to break through that rule as it formerly required an effort to act in accordance with it. The thought of family or duty is enough to convert the act of drinking, which just before was simply the satisfaction of a natural instinct, into a breach of a settled rule. The habit probably acts without converting more of the latent force into an active form than is necessary for the purpose of counteracting the temptation. The intellectual operation brings his action under a new category, and so far it is quite true that his passion is conquered by reason; but it is not in virtue of the purely logical operation, but of the fact that the reason reveals a new set of forces ready to spring into action to the necessary degree.

23. We may thus be said to feel by signs as well as to reason by signs. When we are conducting a logical operation we easily call up the full meaning of the symbols by which the operation is conducted. Symbols are useful precisely because they enable us to dispense with that laborious process. In the same way our feelings are determined without calling into active operation the full meaning which they may convey. The sight of a red flag may deter me from crossing a rifle range without calling up to my imagination all the effects of a bullet traversing my body. If the motive which prompts me to run the risk be strong, it may be necessary to convert a greater volume of latent into active emotion; and as we frequently fail to do this, we often run risks which we should avoid were the consequences distinctly contemplated.

We steer our course by an apparently insignificant rudder, and only call out forces sufficient to overcome the actual resistance. But it would be a great error to assume that the mere call would be sufficient if the force were not at hand and ready to supply the necessary assistance. And thus, if I may say so, the game is generally decided as experienced players decide games, by a simple show of cards on both sides without actually playing out the moves.

24. No theory can be tenable which virtually asserts reason and feeling to be two separate and independent faculties, one of which can properly be said to govern the other. The reason is not something superinduced upon the emotions as something entirely new. There is no absolute gap between the lower and the higher organisms. The animal instinct may be regarded as implicit reason, or the reason as a highly developed instinct. Instinct is reason limited to the immediate, and incapable of reflecting upon its own operations; and reason an extended instinct, apprehending the distant and becoming conscious of its own modes of action. The development of the whole nature implies a development both of the intellectual and the emotional nature. The growth of new sensibilities implies a power of detecting new qualities and new relations between phenomena; and the growth of mechanical power implies the capacity of bringing things into fresh combinations, and so developing new sentiments. The increased range of thought due to the power of forming abstract conceptions and reasoning by symbols is associated with an equal growth in the complexity and variety of the corresponding emotions. That we may have a nature capable of being stirred by such words as patriotism, philosophy, and religion, we must not only have an intellect capable of operations utterly beyond the reach of the lower being, but we must also have sensibility capable of a vast variety of equally new emotions. It is natural, however, that we should look upon the intellectual development as constituting the essence of the change, and interpret the finer methods by which the conflict of feeling is decided in the more developed nature as implying that feeling is superseded by reason. This inter-

pretation, however, is really as erroneous as would be the opinion that the finer instruments which enable us to attain great mechanical results by a trifling expenditure of force enable us to dispense with force altogether. A child can raise a vast weight, with the help of certain machinery, by touching a spring or starting an electric current. We do not infer that the effort is produced without force. Similarly, the delicate and complex mechanical operations of a highly organised intellect may govern the conduct of the agent without evolving any great expenditure of emotion. But it is not that he acts without emotion, only that his emotions act by more complex and refined methods. A word governs them where the duller mind would require the actual stimulus of a powerful passion.

25. Our problem, then, is not how does a reasoning differ from an unreasoning being, but how does the being at a higher stage of development, both intellectual and emotional, differ from the being who is in both respects at a lower stage? But it must also be observed that, in spite of the close connection between the two elements, it is possible to consider them separately. The intellectual faculties, for example, may vary, whilst the emotional remain constant. It is common to speak as though the reason might grow at the expense of the emotions, and *vice versâ*; and though we may criticise the form of the statement, it represents the undeniable fact that emotional activity is, in particular cases, unfavourable to certain forms of intellectual activity. Incapacity for certain modes of feeling must limit our sphere of experience in the matter of knowledge, but great excitability of the same feelings may hinder us from performing the logical operations which always require a certain calm. The most obvious measure of intellectual power is the accuracy with which our ideal constructions represent the actual world outside, and this may vary greatly in different moods without a corresponding variation in its emotional quality. We may conceive, for example, that two beings might be equally absorbed by the passion of hunger; both might regard the world as a gigantic kitchen, and arrange all possible objects under the simple

categories of eatable and non-eatable. But one might differ widely from the other in the accuracy of his judgments as to what was and what was not eatable, and his skill in devising means for conveying the eatable into his stomach. The reasoning being lives in a larger world than the unreasoning, and he is so far more reasonable as his world is more real. The height of unreason, in this sense, is represented by the case in which a man is under an illusion, and supposes his limbs to be glass, or fancies that he can hold a fire in his hand by thinking on the Caucasus. Still the most perfect sanity and the most delicate adjustment of means to end, though it includes certain modes of conduct, leaves a very wide margin of character; and men may be, in this sense, equally reasonable whilst varying indefinitely in conduct.

26. The same considerations apply if we take a different test. The accurate representation of the world implies an accurate representation of our own feelings. A reasonable man, we say, knows his own mind, a knowledge which, as satirists and philosophers agree, is of the rarest. The sentiment excited by any general name should represent that which is actually excited in each particular case. If I accept the principle of loving all men, I am inconsistent in hating any individual of the class man. It would be extravagantly 'unreasonable' to be charitable to every sufferer unless he had, say, red hair or a black skin. In many such cases the eccentricity amounts to a temporary change of character. The sight of some hated symbol has a kind of physiological influence which rouses the wild beast within the man, and for the time turns the philanthropist into a ruffian. The man, as the phrase goes, is no longer himself. So, in other cases, the man who is a stoic in his ideal world gives way to sentiment in the world of realities. This is, of course, possible and common enough, and the development of reason will tend to restrain such oscillations, as the widened area of observation, the increased tendency to view the world as a connected whole, and to bring all observations under general principles must give continuity and consistency to the conduct of life. We

perceive that we act at different moments upon different principles; that at one time our conduct is determined by such purely superficial considerations as the dislike to a particular colour, whilst at another we go beyond the superficial consideration to the interests of the human being which are independent of such trifles. Reason will tend to make such real inconsistencies vanish. But it does not appear that the bare condition of logical consistency is sufficient to eliminate eccentricities. There is always some cause for the wildest vagary or the most unreasonable prejudice. To give a merely formal consistency to my conduct, it is sufficient that this cause should become a reason; that the motives by which I am actually determined should be represented in the general rules which I frame. If hatred to the red-haired actually influences me, I have only to dislike the red-haired man in theory as much as I dislike him in fact to make my conduct consistent in a formal sense. It is, of course, true that this process of conscious representation of my actual character will tend to modify the character itself; for it may be that the motives by which I am in fact prompted will no longer commend themselves when I try to generalise the principles which they embody and to fit them with a code of conduct. Still it would seem that the most eccentric set of prejudices might be stated coherently inasmuch as they do in fact represent real qualities of a single individual. In other words, the bare condition of logical consistence, of the absence of direct contradiction from the feelings by which I am prompted in my ideal constructions, and in the actual occurrence of the case represented, does not suffice to define my conduct any more than the accuracy with which my ideal constructions correspond to the outside world. And for this reason, as it seems to me, it is impossible to deduce laws of conduct from the bare condition of consistency. Any kind of conduct will satisfy that condition if the objective reason or course of action be converted into the subjective cause or reason for action.

27. But the development of our reason doubtless implies more than a mere process of formulating our existing senti-

ments—something beyond a mere superiority in the adaptation of means to ends or in the knowledge of our own characters and the external world. That this must be so follows, indeed, from the connection between the intellectual and the emotional development. The man differs from the beast, not simply by the addition of a faculty which enables him more effectually to gratify the same passions, but by the growth of a new set of emotions, which only exist in germ, if they exist at all, in the inferior beings. We have to ask, then, how far this consideration will help to determine the nature of reasoned conduct. We come upon the track of the old discussion as to the *summum bonum*, that chief good which, it was conceived, must be desired by every one in virtue of his being reasonable. If, in fact, it were possible to define any such end as is implied in all reasoned conduct, we should be at least on the way to a highly important conclusion. Let us see how the difficulty presents itself at this point of the inquiry.

28. We will assume for a moment that we may consider all human conduct as determined by some single end; that there is some constant and definable object towards which all desires converge, and which is common to all men. This is to assume, if we look at the problem from the other side, that all the feelings by which we are prompted may be regarded as modifications of some single instinct. Man will resemble the conventional miser whose sole object in life is to make money, or, in the other mode of statement, whose sole passion is avarice. So far as this can be regarded as at all representing the facts of the case, the influence of increased rationality will be obvious. For it is plain that so far as the man becomes more reasonable, all his activities will be brought to converge upon a single line of action. Since the various subsidiary ends have a common measure, his reason will enable him to compare them, as the miser compares different courses of action, simply in respect of the pecuniary profit. This increased rationality will thus manifest itself in an increased skill in proportioning means to ends, and in a more complete knowledge of his own character. He will have to learn by experience how far new combinations of circumstances will

gratify his ruling (or rather his sole) passion, which is the same thing as discovering what is the law of the passion. He is comparing modes of feeling identical in kind, and to discover how he feels under given circumstances is to discover what circumstances he prefers. This may often be difficult, inasmuch as it may be difficult to bring together in thought two different states; but the criterion is always simple, namely, the balance of gratification in one way or the other. Finally, the fullest development of the reason would not, so far, serve to determine the problem what is this sole or master passion. That still remains as an arbitrary or entirely undetermined element in the problem; though if it could once be fixed, the remainder of the problem would be determinate. Given the love of money, or of any other definite object as determining all the activities, and the rest is a question of calculation. All the rules of action would appear as co-ordinated into a systematic whole as different applications of the one fundamental principle, 'Get money;' as in scientific inquiries all the particular cases appear as embodying (and in that sense obeying) certain simple universal rules.

29. Here, then, the criticism recurs that the happiness which all men desire is not a simple end, but a name for many and radically different forms of gratification. The description just given would hold good in strictness of nothing but a polyp, an organism swayed by a single desire, say, a love of warmth and a dread of cold, and representing not a whole composed of parts but an indivisible atom. If such a being could be supposed to be endowed with reason, its actions would no doubt have a single end, and there could be no dispute as to its *summum bonum*. But as the growth of reason implies the development of a vast complexity of feeling, this apparent unity is illusory. Man, in fact, is a microcosm as complex as the world which is mirrored in his mind; he is a federation incompletely centralised, a hierarchy of numerous and conflicting passions, each of which has ends of its own, and each of which, separately considered, would give a different law of conduct. He is in some sense a unit, but his unity is such as to include an indefinite number of partly independent

sensibilities; and consequently it is impossible to lay down any single end, even for the individual, and still more obviously impossible to lay down such an end as that which is in fact desired by all individuals whatever their constitution. Whether we can lay down such an end as that which all 'ought' to desire is at present not the question; for we are simply dealing with the facts, and have not come within view of the meaning to be attributed to 'ought.'

30. Now the difficulty thus suggested undoubtedly makes it difficult to lay down any simple formula of conduct: it rather tends to prove that any formula which professes to be simple must be illusory. And, moreover, we have this difficulty, that our psychology is at present utterly inadequate to decide what are the elementary passions of which the organic federation is composed, or in what sense they can be regarded as distinct. We must be content with the vaguest and most general propositions upon the subject. We feel that the different physical appetites are in some sense distinct, and perceive them to correspond to different bodily organs. Yet they are not independent; for each organ and each appetite depends at every moment upon the whole organism, or upon the state of the other organs of which it is composed. The difficulty becomes still greater when we come to the higher or intellectual instincts, whose limits and differences are so ill defined, and which have no distinct physical correlates. Leaving it to the psychologists to describe as well as they can the complex constitution of this mysterious federation, we may here be content with one or two remarks. We may assume that we are roughly describing facts when we say that the man, considered upon the emotional side, is built up of a certain small number of primary sensibilities, each of which may be stimulated in a vast variety of ways, and is subject to a number of intricate actions and reactions from its neighbours. Moreover, it is the very condition of organic unity that they form in some sense a whole, so that the action of each is dependent at every moment upon the state of the others. A superior being who could examine our characters would be able to lay down the formula of our conduct, in which

the determining instinct would appear as the resultant of various subordinate instincts, each acting according to the stimulus of external circumstances, and limited by its dependence upon the other constituent parts of the organism. However different the feelings may be in kind, they must be commensurable: they have a certain value in terms of each other, and as parts of a single whole they have a single and (by the superior being) definable resultant. The formula would be beyond measure complex: it would not depend upon the conditions of gratification of a single instinct, but upon the gratifications of several instincts, themselves connected by complex laws expressing the organic constitution of the agent. Instead of supposing, according to my former illustration, that a man's conduct is determined simply by the love of gold, we should have to suppose that he wished for gold and silver and any other metals in certain varying proportions, dependent upon the laws of his own character, whilst the pursuit of each involved more or less inconsistent modes of action. But however complex the resulting formula, and of course it would be indefinitely more complex than the illustration suggests, it would still give determinate rules; and though the end would be harder to define, it would be still definite.

31. Hence, when we return to the question of rationality, we may say that the general result is not affected. For the operation of reason will still tend to bring about a certain unity in the result. So far as any instinct, whether simple or complex, is dominant, the reason will tend to proportion means to ends, and so far to bring about unity of action and purpose. The various actions directed to the gratification of that instinct will form parts of a coherent and intelligible system. Further, as the emotions are closely connected, as they blend with each other, and the whole process of development is a process of forming a certain hierarchy in which the separate and special instincts are subordinated to the more central and massive, the reason will develop, if not a unity, at least a harmony of action. For, so far as we reason, the action of each separate instinct is controlled by a constant

reference to the requirements of others. We may act like the lower animals under the immediate impulse of hunger, but our hunger is restrained, not only by the foresight of to-morrow's appetite, but by the knowledge that this indulgence may be at the expense of other pleasures. The passion is regulated and restrained by our desire of a more intellectual or emotional enjoyment. Reason supplies, if we may say so, the flywheel which makes every part of the machinery act under the influence of the other parts with which it is organically connected. A caprice—such as the dislike to the red-haired—is checked, because such a caprice implies obedience to the single emotion without reference to other considerations. We act absurdly because we forget that the redness of hair is not inconsistent with the persistence of the same feelings and sympathies which determine our conduct in the case of men of a different complexion. So far as we are reasonable we are able to consider our conduct, and to consider in any given case all that is implied in it. Instead of being guided exclusively by the superficial consideration, we see in the mind's eye all the deeper and more important circumstances which it involves; and therefore the strongest feelings, whatever they may be. the most permanent emotions, are being constantly called into play to correct and dominate the trifling ones. Each instinct has its voice in determining the action of the federal government, but no one is allowed to take the command exclusively without reference to the wishes of the others.

32. But such considerations, which might be expanded to much greater length, and which would require expansion in a psychological treatise, still leave the important question open. The reason brings the whole conduct into harmony and unity; it forbids us to pursue trifling objects at the expense of important; for instead of allowing each instinct to operate exclusively in turn, it subjects each to the implicit and explicit control of the others. And the very mode by which our rational and emotional nature is evolved implies this constant centralisation proceeding *pari passu* with our reason in the complexity of thought and feeling. The great central emotions become stronger as the discovered laws, whether of

our own or of external nature, become ranged into a consistent hierarchy of principles. But we may still ask, how is the relation between the different instincts determined? What settles the influence exerted by each member of the federation? What do we mean when we speak of one interest as trifling and another as important? One passion, as a matter of fact, is less powerful than another under given circumstances, but the weaker is not therefore suppressed. Hunger will still overcome love under certain conditions, though the relative importance of the part which it plays in the whole organism will be diminished (let us assume) as the reasoning power increases. The character is determined for each individual by its original constitution, though the character is modified as the reason acts, not only because reason accumulates a constant reference to certain motives, and so gives them greater influence in determining conduct, but because it enables us after a time to judge even of our own character as a whole, to rehearse not only particular acts but moods, and so become spectators of ourselves, and regard our own feelings with disgust or complacency. Every such reflection tends to modify future action by revealing to us more distinctly its social consequences, and by investing it with certain associations of approval or disapproval. But, after all, we start with a certain balance of feeling, with certain fixed relations between our various instincts; and however these may change afterwards, our character is so far determined from the start. Again, it is plain that this varies greatly with different people and gives rise to different types. In one man the sensual passions have a greater relative importance than in his neighbour, and so forth. And the question arises, whether we can determine which of these types, or any of them, is most reasonable?

33. So far as we have gone, I do not see how any conclusion of this kind can be drawn. Assuming a certain end, as I have said, we may say what is the most reasonable mode of conduct, and what therefore will be the conduct of the most reasonable man with a view to that end. But nothing hitherto stated will enable us to define the end which is itself

most reasonable, or to give any meaning to the phrase. And this argument becomes, if anything, stronger when we admit that the end is exceedingly complex, instead of being simple and uniform. Each type of character has its own end, which may determine the persistent and harmonious action. The sensualist has purposes as definite and intelligible from his point of view as the ascetic. The rule, 'Let everyone care for me,' is quite as simple, and, in a logical point of view, defines conduct as consistently and reasonably, as the rule, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' That motive is most important for any man which corresponds to his strongest and most frequently stimulated instinct; but we have so far no means of saying why reason should determine any particular relation between the instincts, or why any one character should not be just as reasonable as any other. In short, there is so far an arbitrary element in our data which we have found no means of determining. Man is both a reasoning and a feeling animal. We can say what it is to be more reasonable, in so far as reason implies a conformity between the actual world and the ideal world by which it is represented; and this holds good whatever the precise meaning attributed to those words by the metaphysician. We are still at a loss to determine the other element of the problem: what is that criterion, if any, by which we can judge of feelings? They exist, and so far cannot be called true or false. They are actual or they are nothing. If actual, in what sense is one feeling, or set of feelings, or one type of character, better than another? That, of course, is the vital problem of all ethical speculation, which will recur in various forms hereafter. To answer it at all, we must, as I hold, have recourse to a different set of considerations, and they must be those already indicated in the previous chapter, where I have pointed out that the arbitrariness of our data is corrected by the theory of evolution.

## IV. *Types*

34. Every reasoning agent, I have said, represents a certain type. Since his conduct is regulated in each particular by a

certain regard to the purposes of his life, and his sentiments are constantly correcting and blending with each other, there is a certain unity of character in spite of the complex constitution of his nature. Each impulse is subordinated to the whole, and there is a subjective unity of sentiment corresponding to the objective unity of organisation. The phrases thus used are necessarily vague, and a kind of mystical sense has been sometimes imported into them. We must try to give them a little more precision; and, in particular, we must ask what is meant by a 'type,' an expression which frequently recurs in these discussions. Consider, for example, a simple mechanical contrivance, such as a bow. The bow was, we may suppose, originally discovered by some simple experience which revealed to some primitive savage the properties of a special combination of wood and sinew. Successive experiments gradually led to improved forms, by some such process, it may be, as that which is illustrated in Lamb's philosophical apologue of roast pig. Every improved form would be used because it saved trouble. To have the best form of bow was a matter of importance to each tribe for use against beasts or enemies. The tribe which had the best bow would have an advantage in the struggle for existence. Whenever accident revealed an improvement, it would be adopted whenever the powers of observation were keen enough to note the saving of labour required for a given effect. As men became intelligent, experiments would be tried with more conscious and deliberate purpose, and in time they might be carried out upon system, and general formulæ would be laid down. Discovery would become invention as the foresight and powers of calculation developed, and in time mechanical theorists would become able to lay down general rules, stating the relation between the power and the materials of bows and arrows, and the range, accuracy, penetration, and so forth, of the weapons.

35. Without pursuing this conjectural history, it is clear that in any case there is a definite problem to be solved. Given the materials and the purpose to be attained, one form of bow would represent the maximum of efficiency. If, for

example, the archer has at his disposal a particular kind of wood and has to pursue a particular kind of game, he will have to satisfy a particular set of conditions which might be expressed in mathematical formulæ. Whether he has to work out the best form of bow by rule of thumb, or whether he is able to apply general rules, the process is essentially the same, though in the latter case he can reason about whole classes of cases as well as about particular cases, and can understand more precisely what he is about, and be guided against attempting impossibilities or satisfying contradictory conditions. Even in so simple a case the complexity of the data is so great that it might exceed the powers of the most skilful mechanist to deduce the result from general principles. But in any case the problem is determinate. The bow, we may say, is there; and in some way or other it may be formed, however tentative or systematic the method.

36. The bow, then, which represents the best solution of the problem may be called the typical bow. It is that form to which bows approximate so far as perfect, and every deviation from which implies a defect. The actual may differ, either as simply worse in all respects, or as gaining some advantage at the price of others, such as a longer range with less accuracy. The problem as to the degree in which it is worth while to sacrifice range to accuracy can only be determined by its use, and presumably by a series of experiments. And assuming the use and the materials to be constant, we may regard the evolution of bows as a long series of attempts, extending, it may be, over many generations, to solve the problem. The discovery of a new material or the application of the bow to fresh purposes would set up a new process of development. No bow is an actual realisation of the type, for every bow, like every man, has its faults; nor is the average the same as the typical bow, for deviations may take place more frequently in one direction than another. But the typical and ideal bow represents that maximum of efficiency to which the bow tends to approximate, either by the direct perception of its utility by the archers, or by the fact that the archers who have the best bows are likely to exterminate the others.

37. It is not irrelevant to observe that an instrument which thus approximates to a type as the product of a slow elaboration has a special beauty. The idea of the bow has been rolled in countless minds till it is rounded to perfection, like the pebble on the sea-beach. Everything superfluous has been removed, as the trained athlete gets rid of superfluous tissues. It is exquisitely adapted to its purpose; and the pleasure of contemplating it implies that we can perceive this adaptation and derive from it that subtle sense of harmony which governs our intellectual emotions. The pleasure, in fact, is another aspect of the skill implied in the so-called 'rule of thumb.' Though we cannot calculate, we can feel the utility. The recognition of the perfect adaptation reveals itself to our feelings as æsthetic satisfaction. The instinct outruns our power of scientific statement of the conditions; for, in fact, the scientific knowledge corresponds only to that small part of our knowledge which is capable of definite articulate statement.

38. We may trace a similar principle in forms infinitely more complex. A Greek statue, we say, represents a type of physical excellence. We cannot explain precisely how the sculptor discovered the type, nor how we recognise it when presented; but we do, in fact, recognise the solution of an amazingly complex problem. The anatomist can tell us, within certain limits, why one combination of bone and muscle is more efficient than another. The artist is able to present us directly with the form which represents the maximum of strength and agility possible to human flesh and blood. The figure, we say, is perfectly graceful, because it can perform any given task with the least expenditure of strength, or make a given amount of strength do the most work. Nothing is superfluous and nothing deficient. The being represented could leap a given height with the least exertion, or leap the greatest height with a given exertion. And here too we see that the form is the best relatively to certain conditions. The Hercules or the Apollo may each be the best form as we require the greatest possible strength to wield a club or the greatest possible activity of locomotion.

So, in fact, every athlete is generally best at some particular exercise, or in some special department of that exercise. The typical athlete represents rather a typical group than a single form. Most defects are disqualifications for every kind of excellence, but, as between different representatives of the typical group, we cannot say positively that one is best unless we can define the function excellence in which is to supply the criterion. And when this function is determined, we have equally to assume certain data. If the best athlete is to be the best runner, or say the best runner for a given distance, we still have to remember that the athlete has not only to be a runner, but a breathing, thinking, digesting animal, to have lungs, brains, and stomach ; and we tacitly assume, in speaking of the typical form, that the resulting conditions have to be satisfied. We do not speak, or rather we cannot speak with any intelligible meaning, of the greatest speed absolutely, but of the greatest speed obtainable consistently with the general conditions implied in the other wants of the human frame.

39. We can give, then, a precise meaning to the word 'type' so long as the end and the conditions can be regarded as fixed. The bow has to bring about a certain result under certain conditions. It is part of a whole, and may be considered as a supplementary limb discharging a given function in the organism. But when we take the whole organism, the meaning requires modification. The eye is useful to the hand and to the whole organic system ; the hand, again, to the organism, including the eye. Each part is good or bad relatively to the whole ; but what is implied by the whole ? When there is some external criterion the answer is easy. We can say what is the typical sheep from the point of view of the butcher, or again from the point of view of the wool merchant ; but, what is the typical sheep considered absolutely ? If the word 'absolutely' be used in such a sense as to exclude a reference to any conditions whatever, the question ceases to have any meaning. It is intelligible to ask what is the greatest speed of an animal, or of a steam engine, or of an electric message, because in each case I assign a limit of possibility ; but to ask what is the greatest speed possible for

anything is to ask a question which by its nature has no answer. What then is the criterion by which the sheep is to be judged? We may say that it is the sum total of all the sheep's relations to the external world, for we have no means of regarding one relation rather than another. Again, each form of sheep plays its own part in the general system, and the judgment of butcher, wool merchant, or hunter will differ according to his particular needs. How are we to decide which judgment is right or in what sense we can apply right or wrong to such estimates?

40. The answer to this question, which I must accept, for I cannot inquire into the ultimate grounds, is that supplied by the evolutionist. That theory, I take it, implies the following statements. The organism—sheep or man—is not a simple aggregate of independent parts which might be put together according to one configuration or another. In that case all that we could say of it would be, that an organism was composed of such and such parts or that a conscious being had such and such instincts; but that, for anything we could say, the same elements might be put together in any other way. The ultimate constitution would remain as a perfectly arbitrary set of data. We should be unable to get beyond the difficulty in which we have been already landed. But we learn from the theory of evolution that as the individual organism is composed of mutually dependent parts, and that its existence involves the maintenance of a certain equilibrium, so each organism supports itself as a part in a more general equilibrium, and that its constitution depends at every moment upon a process of adaptation to the whole system of the world. And this may be expressed by saying that every animal represents the solution of a problem as well as a set of data for a new problem. As the bow is felt out, the animal is always feeling itself out. The problem which it solves is how to hold its own against the surrounding pressure and the active competition of innumerable rivals. A species, indeed, does not simply adapt itself to absolutely fixed conditions, like wax poured into a rigid mould. In altering itself it alters to some extent its environment. By extirpating a rival race it

sets up a whole series of actions and reactions, implying a readjustment of the whole equilibrium amongst all the races with which it is in contact, and to some extent an alteration of the inorganic world. A new state of things slowly substitutes itself for the old, but in such a way that each species is continuous with the preceding, and has been slowly remoulded by an incessant series of unconscious experiments conducted under the constant condition that failure means extirpation. Hence, though we cannot say that either the end or the conditions are absolutely constant, and though any full statement would have to be unendingly complex in consequence, the whole process is describable as a slow elaboration of types. The material at any moment is a species, a group of organised beings, capable of varying within certain limits, placed under conditions which, for the moment, are apparently fixed, and succeeding in so far as it realises the condition of maximum total efficiency. The capacity for holding its own replaces the condition of fitness for a fixed external end.

41. We assume, then, that, although we cannot apply an *à priori* method, although we cannot define the materials of which men are made, or the end which they have to fulfil, we can determine to some extent their typical excellence. Recognising the general nature of the great problem which is being worked out, we can discover what is implied in some of the results. The process of evolution must at every moment be a process of discovering a maximum of efficiency, though the conditions are always varying slowly, and an absolute maximum is inconceivable. At every point of the process there is a certain determinate direction along which development must take place. The form which represents this direction is the typical form, any deviation from which is a defect. This typical form, again, so long as evolution continues, cannot represent an ultimate result; it is not (if I may say so) at the summit of a peak, but on the summit line of a perpetually ascending ridge. The actual forms are almost always more or less defective; the individual is below the ridge, not at a higher point of a ridge. Gradually, indeed, if development

continues, the type itself will improve; one particular form will differ from the previous variations by being at a higher point of the ridge, and in that last it will represent the advance towards a new species.

42. To take into account all the corrections which would be necessary for an accurate statement would be very difficult, and for my purpose the task would be superfluous. The exposition and establishment of the theory of evolution lies beyond the ethical problem, and is one of the data which we must be content either to repudiate or (as I do) take for granted. I will merely add one remark which may indicate some of the difficulties involved in a complete statement. I have said that every type must be relative to the assumed end. As one form of athletic excellence is best for one exercise and another for a different exercise, so in the higher qualities there is room for an indefinite variety of qualities, each of which may be best in certain relations. There may, indeed probably there must be, properties common to all the typical forms, but they must be such as to be reconcilable with great individual variation. So, for example, a man may be a poet, a philosopher, a statesman, and so forth, and we may say that to each function there corresponds an appropriate type. Now it is conceivable that the highest excellence in different departments of conduct may imply consistent conditions. The greatest philosopher may also be the greatest athlete and the greatest poet. It is equally clear that there is no necessary connection. Brains of abnormal power may be associated with puny muscles. The sensibility of a poet, the preoccupation with abstract principles of a philosopher, may unfit either for business. The statement, indeed, is always ambiguous; for it does not follow that the poetic sensibility might not be combined with the qualities of a man of business, as (apparently) was the case of Shakespeare. It seems, however, to be a highly general rule, that great excellence has, as it were, to be bought at a price, and that efficiency in one direction implies deficiency in others. Here, then, occurs the question—only to be solved by experiment—What is the relative value of different kinds of efficiency? And a complete answer might

bring out the fact, which seems on other grounds probable, that it is an advantage to a race to include a great variety of different types. To take this into account would require a new complexity of statement. It is enough, however, to say here, that by speaking of a type I do not mean to assert that there is one special constitution, conformity to which by any individual of a race is a condition of efficiency, but simply that the process of evolution is always the working out of a problem which implies the attainment of general efficiency by the acquisition of certain general qualities.

### V. *The Principle of Utility*

43. These considerations, however, lie rather outside of the relevant argument. Before proceeding, it may be well to call attention to the nature of the position here adopted. I have, in fact, shifted my point of view. Speaking of motives, I have argued that conduct is determined by pain and pleasure. The painfulness of a state is a sufficient, ultimate, and sole reason for avoiding it. But in speaking of the elements of character, I have substituted for the consideration of pain and pleasure the consideration of conditions of existence. The fact is simply that the constants in one problem are variables in the other. Given a certain character, the agent does what gives him pleasure. But if we ask how he comes to have that character, the only mode of answering is by referring to the conditions of existence. His character must be such as to fit him for the struggle of life. The reason of conduct is always its quality in terms of pain or pleasure. The cause of its being painful or pleasurable is the constitution of the agent; and for this constitution we can only account, so far as we can account for it at all, by considering it as a variable, dependent upon the conditions of life. Only in this way does the problem from which we started become determinate. If we take character as fixed, the development of reason can only imply a harmony, an adaptation of means to ends, and so forth, leaving the end or the dominating instinct in itself a positive or arbitrary datum. As character varies, so will the

ends vary; and from the simple consideration of consistency, or of pain and pleasure, we cannot by any ingenuity determine what will be the general law of conduct. Hence the necessity and the importance of the other mode of investigation, as enabling us to assign more or less precisely the conditions of this constitution, which, from the other point of view, must be taken for granted. This double mode of reasoning involves, therefore, no inconsistency, and is forced upon us by the conditions of the case. We may regard conduct either as painful and pleasurable, or as conducive or not conducive to the permanent existence of the agent. And hence we have the consideration that there must be a correlation between painful and pernicious actions on the one hand, and pleasurable and beneficial on the other. A man will do what pleases him, and, if he is to live, must do what is good for him, or at least what is not destructive. The 'useful,' in the sense of pleasure-giving, must approximately coincide with the 'useful' in the sense of life-preserving. This is a fundamental doctrine from the evolutionist point of view, and requires a little further consideration.

44. We may remark, in the first place, that all conduct may be considered as a set of habits, to each of which, so far as it is voluntary, there is a corresponding instinct. I use both words in the widest possible sense. By a habit I mean any mode of conduct which can be brought under a general rule, and this, of course, would include the automatic as well as voluntary actions. I use instinct, again, to include all conscious impulses to action, whether including more or less reasoned choice, and whether innate or acquired. Some mode of feeling conditions all conscious action. Whether the immediate action is pleasant in itself, or pleasant because regarded as part of a whole system of actions, involving remote consequences discoverable by refined calculations, it still involves in the last result some pleasurable emotion. The operative instinct may be an animal instinct, such as hunger, or an instinct involving high intellectual development, such as patriotism or religion. Where an action is simply an end to some remote purpose, and absolutely indifferent in other

respects, it is the foretaste of the pleasure derivable from the remote consequences which determines the action; and, of course, it is often difficult to decide what may be the true motive. But in any case, there is some motive, and the instinct means the sensibility to that class of motive. We may then compare habits and their corresponding instincts, in respect of their painfulness and pleasurableness, or in respect of their utility, so far as they imply total efficiency or the reverse; which means, again (when we consider the organism primarily and not the consequences of action), in respect of their essentiality or superficiality.

45. There are, in fact, some habits which are essential to the organisms—such habits (if the word may be used in so strained a sense) as breathing or digesting. They are the processes which constitute life rather than maintain it, and are, for the most part, automatic, or beyond the direct reach of our volition. We can kill ourselves as we can kill another man, and so suspend digestion; but our volition does not immediately affect the digestive process in our own more than in another man's stomach. From this point of maximum necessity the habits graduate to the most superficial and transitory. Some may be changed or abolished by a transitory change of feeling, whilst others can only be altered by a reconstruction of our whole character. And this suggests a remark, familiar enough, but worth the explicit statement, because many fallacies spring from its neglect. It is simply this: that every theory about an organ or any property of an organism must be understood with a reference, tacit or express, to the mutual interdependence of every part of the organic whole. If, for example, I say that a certain habit is pleasant or painful, useful or pernicious, I must remember that the habit cannot be simply deducted as from a sum total of independent wholes, and that, on the contrary, its removal must involve to some extent a readjustment of the whole organic equilibrium. It is therefore essential to take into account all the indirect or underlying consequences involved in this consideration, as well as to strike an average of the good or bad effects of the habit itself. In order that the proposition,

'This habit is a bad one,' may have any real meaning, we must assume that the organism can exist without the habit. If this be possible, then we must take into account all the differences necessarily involved. We must compare the whole man as he exists with a certain quality to the whole man as he exists without it. To suppose that any given characteristic can be simply subtracted, is to argue as though cutting off a leg had no other consequence than removing a crutch. In one case the whole character of the man is affected, in the other it remains constant. The fallacies which result from an oversight of this obvious truth are so common and pestilent, that it is necessary to take note of their nature. We are always tempted to assume that we can take off a habit as we can take off a coat, and to suppose that some political or social evil can be remedied by simply removing the most obvious source of the mischief without troubling ourselves to ask what other organic changes will be set up. This error is indeed so common as to be almost the master-error of a crude sociology, and it may be described as a virtual confusion between organic and merely mechanical wholes.

46. It is important to remember this in considering the principle just laid down of the correlation between painful and pernicious habits. Some such process, I have said, is necessarily implied in the evolutionist theory, and is implied at every stage. The highest organism has been built up from the lowest under the constant stress of this condition. From the vague wriggle of the worm who acts upon the implicit formula, 'Any change may be for the better,' though one wriggle may save and another slay, as it takes him into or out of the beak of the bird, up to the most refined motives and delicate calculations of the philosopher or statesman who meets a danger by a specific series of carefully co-ordinated actions, the general principle must still be the same. So far as the instincts of any agent lead him into danger, they are a point against him; so far as they lead him into safety, a point in his favour in the ceaseless competition. In every case, too, we must consider the total effect. The growth of a new instinct brings fresh dangers as well as fresh advantages.

The problem which is always being worked out is whether the new form is on the whole more or less capable of holding its own. It does not simply drop out one instinct and insert another, but is more or less modified throughout, so as possibly to develop unsuspected qualities in directions very remote from that which is most conspicuously concerned.

47. This suggests the problem as to the true theory of pain and pleasure. Granting the general truth of this principle of correlation between the two kinds of utility, we may ask whether it cannot be pushed further? May it not be possible to show from the nature of the case that pain and pleasure are necessarily connected with pernicious and beneficial processes respectively? It has in fact been maintained, and with a considerable show of evidence, that there is some intimate connection between pleasure and a state of heightened vitality on the one hand, and between pain and a state of lowered vitality on the other. I will not go into an argument which is not strictly relevant to my case, and which would lead me far beyond the limits of my knowledge, and, as I imagine, beyond the limits of all established science. The connection, whatever it may be, can only be discovered by careful and prolonged investigations; it takes us into the perplexing region of obscure physiology; it gets mixed up with controversies as to the ultimate metaphysical problem of the relation between subject and object. I will only venture one observation, bearing upon the limits within which the principle is applicable. We may certainly say, in general terms, that there is as close a connection between health and happiness as between disease and misery, and that the anomalies which present themselves in attempting to generalise this theory might be cleared up by a more accurate investigation. But this does not tend, properly speaking, to explain the connection, nor does it show with any precision how close the connection must be. The principle may reveal a tendency and as exhibiting certain conditions of organic life, but it does not in any sense explain the existence and the intimate nature of pain and pleasure.

48. Thus, in the first place, if we use the word 'utility'

in the subjective sense, it means, as I have said, nothing but painful and pleasurable. Every pleasure is so far good, every pain so far bad; and it is a contradiction in terms to speak of a pain as useful. The only admissible meaning of such a phrase emerges when we regard the system as a whole, and admit that a certain pain is useful because a loss of the susceptibility to the pain in question would involve a greater pain on the whole. The being enjoys the maximum happiness possible under its conditions of life, although its constitution involves a certain admixture of pain. If, again, we speak of utility in the other and objective sense, a pain may be useful so far as it determines to preservative actions, although this, again, only implies utility in the first sense so far as preservation implies a balance of happiness. Now we must assume that, in some way or other, painful or pleasurable states are dependent upon the material conditions of the organism, and, moreover, dependent upon its actual state at each moment, and upon its mode of working, not upon its absolute strength or ability. The absolute strength, in fact, means its potential capacity of resisting any strain to which it might be subjected. If the strain is not actually present, the capacity to bear it may not be required. Many diseases are painless; weak lungs, for example, often give little pain unless the patient is called upon for some exertion. The healthy lung, we must suppose, has great reserves of power; but so long as they are not called into action, it matters not whether they exist or not. It is the right working of the machinery which is relevant, not the power of the machinery to bear work under different circumstances. Till the crash comes, the weak fibre which does all that is needed is as useful and produces no more pain than the strong fibre. And so, again, the fact that any mode of conduct may lead to bad consequences hereafter does not of itself produce either pain or pleasure, though to the reasoning animal the anticipated evil is already an evil. In the absence of that anticipation we have only to ask whether the organic equilibrium is maintained, and have no concern with results. I walk with equal comfort whether I am advancing to a pitfall or along a firm path, or whether I am or am not

weakening some vital part, so long as I am not weakening it in such a way as to interfere with the maintenance of a certain equilibrium.

49. We must suppose, then, that pain and pleasure are the correlatives of certain states which may be roughly regarded as the smooth and the distorted working of the physical machinery, and that, given those states, the sensations must always be present. So far we do not come in sight of any question of utility or of any sense in which pain can be regarded as useful. We reach that point of view where we take into account the principle already stated, but incapable (as it seems to me) of any proof except that of observation, that pain corresponds to unstable and pleasure to stable states of equilibrium. So far, that is, as our feelings determine our conduct, they determine us to avoid pain and retain pleasure. And this is quite enough to show that there is a tendency to correlate painful and pernicious, pleasurable and beneficial. The agent which delights in states which generally have pernicious consequences is so far self-destructive. An animal which liked poisonous food would be unable to exist when the food was easily obtainable. And it is clear that this condition, which has been always operative from the earliest stages of evolution, must maintain the correlation within certain limits. It is equally clear that the correlation is very far indeed from perfect. The growth of a new taste involves new dangers as well as new advantages, and may establish itself if the new animal as a whole is better than the old as a whole. If external circumstances change, new relations are developed which may bring out new evils. The taste of a savage for strong drink may be harmless because dormant until the civilised man introduces firewater. There is, again, no obvious reason why a perfectly useless pain may not endure indefinitely. The agony caused by certain diseases must remain as long as the constitutional state which it reflects is producible under actual circumstances; and to bring about such a change in the organism as would make this state impossible may involve such a total change in its whole construction, involving all manner of collateral changes, as may never be

realised, or be realisable only at the price of developing other evils. And, again, many actions once pleasurable tend to become automatic, and so there is apparently at least a loss of happiness without any obvious compensation. We may perhaps guess that there is even in this case an advantage, inasmuch as the automatic performance of any action tends, so to speak, to set the consciousness free for other purposes; and thus, although the most highly developed agent is the most perfect automaton, he has also for that very reason a greater range of conscious thought and feeling. Such considerations are enough to remind us how limited is our knowledge and how rapidly we are reduced to vague conjectures. This only may be said, that the correlation in question does not imply that all our pleasures and pains are useful in the sense of tending to self-preservation, as indeed such a correlation would be manifestly contradictory to all our experience; and, again, it does not tend to explain in any way whatever the existence of pain and pleasure, for this existence is presupposed, and is presumably dependent upon a direct relation between the feelings and the organic processes, which is to us absolutely inscrutable; but at the same time it represents a highly important condition, which must regulate at every stage the process of evolution. It only justifies us in saying, that so far as any agent takes pleasure in things conducive to his preservation, he has a better chance of survival, and, therefore, that we may regard compliance with this condition as one cardinal point in the theory of organic development.

50. How much further can we proceed? One remark is of course obvious. So far as any instinct is deeply seated, so far, that is, as a being would require a complete reconstruction to exist without it, we may consider that it has a presumption in favour of its utility. It may be absolutely essential to the existence of the organism; and even if plainly non-essential, we may fairly argue against its being pernicious. An institution which has flourished in many different ages and races under the most various conditions must presumably fulfil some want and correspond to some deeply seated

instinct. So, to take a familiar example, it is possible that the taste for stimulants may be injurious, but it has in its favour the number of healthy and vigorous races in which it is found, showing that at least it cannot be destructive of vigour under all circumstances ; and, again, we must admit that it satisfies a very widely spread desire, which may be dependent upon a profound constitutional necessity, and which will have to find its satisfaction in one way or another. The problem, therefore, is not solved by a simple summation of good and bad results, but involves an inquiry as to the place filled by a desire for stimulants in the whole economy of life. Whether any conclusions assuming to be called scientific can be reached by such methods need not be considered at present. The illustration may at any rate give some general indication of the true import of the question to be put and the data required for a satisfactory answer.

### VI. *Social and Individual Utility*

**51.** I have spoken of instinct, habit, and so forth, as being essential or non-essential to the organism, and have added that between these two relations there may be an indefinite number of gradations. What, then, is precisely meant by 'essential' in this connection? At a given moment any instinct may be essential in this sense, that the agent could not exist without it. A man's life may depend upon his possessing abnormal speed, strength, and eyesight. The life of the organism depends at every instant upon his relation to the surrounding world, and by varying them we may vary the requirements indefinitely. In speaking, therefore, of any organism generally, we tacitly assume the existence of the appropriate medium. A capacity is only essential if it is essential under these normal conditions. A power of breathing air is essential to certain classes of animals. They cannot live in any other medium, and they cannot live in air if they are incapacitated for this function. The bare existence of the animal implies the existence of certain conditions and of certain corresponding powers, and those faculties are properly

essential without which it could not live anywhere, not those without which it could not live in some particular set of cases. Admitting this, there occurs another difficulty. The process by which the correlation of pernicious and painful states is worked out is one which, by its very nature, must take a considerable number of generations. Races survive in virtue of the completeness of this correlation. But the quality which makes a race survive may not always be a source of advantage to every individual, nor even, if we look closer, to the average individual. Since the race has no existence apart from the individual, qualities essential to the existence of each unit are of course essential to the existence of the whole. If one animal cannot live without lungs, a million cannot. But the converse proposition does not hold. In fact, there is a large and important group of instincts in regard to which it is manifestly untrue. The sexual and parental instincts are essential to the race, for without them the race would cease in a single generation. It is equally certain that they are not essential to the individual. An animal deprived of them may not only live and thrive, but will avoid many dangers to which it is exposed by possessing them. The 'unnatural' mother has the great advantage that she will not give her life for her young. And it is at least conceivable, though it may not happen actually, that some creatures thus devoid of passions upon which the continuance of the race absolutely depends may be not only happier under certain special conditions, but may, on the average, enjoy more happiness than their neighbours. In such cases, the parents virtually sacrifice themselves for the good of the race. They may be unconscious of the sacrifice, and we cannot call them unselfish. They are rather in a state of mind in which, as devoid of all prevision of consequences, the question of selfishness and unselfishness has not yet presented itself. They act in a way not calculated to bring in the greatest amount of happiness, but they act in obedience to an instinct not guided by any calculation as to the fall of the balance.

52. Here, then, is a case, and one of the very highest importance, for it concerns the germ of all social life, in which

we see that the correlation between the beneficial and the pernicious must be interpreted in a sense different from that which we might at first sight take for granted. An instinct, that is, grows and decays not on account of its effects on the individual, but on account of its effects upon the race. The animal which on the whole is better adapted for continuing its species will have an advantage in the struggle, even though it may not be so well adapted for pursuing its own happiness. Here, then, it becomes desirable to attempt to bring into greater distinctness the true meaning of the contrast between the individual and the race, in order that we may endeavour to determine in what sense there can or cannot be a conflict between the individual who is the product of the race, and the race which is itself formed of individuals, and in what way the principle already laid down must be explained or modified when we take this distinction into account.

# CHAPTER III

## SOCIAL MOTIVES

### I. *The Individual and the Race*

1. The last chapter has brought us to a distinction of vital importance. We have had to distinguish between the effects of the interests of societies and the interests of individuals. An action or an instinct may, it seems, be of essential importance to the whole, and of little or none to the individual, and this distinction will obviously affect our reasoning at many points. If we assert that the survival of an instinct is determined by its utility, we must further decide how the utility is to be measured, whether we are to consider the utility to the individual or the utility to society, and in what sense any distinction is possible. Other difficulties may reveal themselves as we proceed. We will therefore begin by attempting to define as clearly as we can the true meaning of the distinction in question. We may thus be able to understand the nature of the social bond so far as is necessary for our purpose, and to consider what language will be best adapted to express the relations involved.

2. It is of course obvious that the individual and the race are not two separate things capable of coming into collision. The individual, as I have said, is the product of the race ; and the race the sum of the individuals. And the fact that the immediate interests of an individual may be incompatible with those of the race does not necessarily affect our statement. The existence of such incompatibility is of course only too familiar a fact. The prosperity of a Napoleon may involve the degradation of his country. But when I speak of 'the individual' as being better or worse adapted to his circum-

stances, I am not speaking of any particular person, but of the average person. A Napoleon may conceivably thrive by possessing qualities which are injurious to his fellows. But it would be something very like a contradiction to suppose that the average man might be improved by conferring upon each qualities prejudicial to the rest. If the average person is more intelligent and richer, the whole of which he forms a part possesses a greater sum of intelligence and wealth. If the qualities of any society may be regarded—and in some sense it seems that they must be regarded—as the sum of the qualities of its constituent units, it follows that whatever strengthens or weakens the average unit must also weaken or strengthen the whole. This, indeed, would be accurately true if we were justified in considering each unit as so far independent that what is true of each might be applied to all by direct multiplication. The difficulty begins to show itself when we regard society not as a mechanical aggregate, but as an organic whole. In that case, we cannot regard the efficiency of the whole as a simple sum of separate efficiencies. The qualities of each unit may then be dependent for their nature and for their efficiency upon their relations to the organism. Thus, for example, if we take an army, its efficiency will depend partly upon the strength of the soldier, and partly upon his discipline. Double the marching power of each soldier, and you will double the length of marches possible for the army. But an increase in the spirit of discipline produces an effect upon the army which cannot be determined by simple multiplication ; for not only may the efficiency of the army be enormously increased by a slight increase in the spirit, but such an increase may operate very differently under different states of the army. It might diminish its efficiency in warfare which required separate action, as it might enormously increase it where the first necessity was unity, and therefore blind obedience. A quality useful to the whole when acting together might be prejudicial to the individual member when acting independently. Hence, it would seem, we have in this case a datum which could not be determined without some knowledge of the total organism, as well as of its separate

parts. The distinction, therefore, between the race and the individual, though not a distinction as of two separate things, may be of great importance as corresponding to a distinction in the mode in which the efficiency is affected by different qualities. For some purposes a body may be regarded as an aggregate, whilst for others it can only be understood as an organic whole. And this has evidently an important bearing upon our reasoning.

3. Let us see how this difference must be expressed upon the theory already laid down. I have spoken of qualities, instincts, organs, and so forth, as being either essential or non-essential to an organism. It is plain that it would be idle to ask what any organism would be without any of its essential qualities. We should in that case be referring to a mere nonentity. When we say *man*, we mean, amongst other things, a living being with a stomach, and environed by eatable matter. To say that a man would be better or worse if he had no stomach, is to put together words which have no real meaning whatever, or, in any case, to speak of some creature so radically different from a man for most purposes, that it would lead to mere confusion to apply the same name to it. You might describe a statue as a man without organs, but this is simply to play with words, unless we confine our reasoning to properties dependent exclusively upon external forms. By 'man,' we mean a being belonging to a given class, and varying within the limits determined by the essential properties of the class; and amongst these essential properties we must, of course, reckon dependence upon a race. Man means a being born of woman, and perhaps a being ultimately descended from a monkey. It would, therefore, be sheer nonsense to speak of a man as if he either might or might not be in some respects independent of society. He may be in the position of a Robinson Crusoe, and living in a desert island; but even so he must have been begotten, born, kept alive through infancy, and have inherited whatever qualities are implied in those processes. A man not dependent upon a race is as meaningless a phrase as an apple that does not grow upon a tree. The words have no sense, or a purely arbitrary

sense. And further, it is equally clear that the best type of man must mean the best type of man developed under those conditions. The best kind of bread means the best food that can be made out of grain; and though a lump of granite might have some qualities which in a different relation are better than those of bread, it would be a mere juggle if we said that the bread least likely to spoil was 'bread' made of granite.

4. It follows that the distinction drawn between the social and the self-regarding qualities, or, again, between qualities as useful to the race and useful to the individual, cannot possibly be ultimate distinctions. Every man is both an individual and a social product, and every instinct both social and self-regarding. To say that a man is an organism is to say that each of his organs is so dependent upon all the others that it cannot be removed without altering the whole organic balance; or, as I have said, that a leg is not, or is not solely, a crutch. If we speak, then, of one instinct as referring to the society and another as referring to the individual, we must always remember that each of necessity implies the other. In speaking of them apart, we are using the artifice of the mathematician who considers one set of symbols to be variable and another as constant, not as meaning that the quantities which they represent are really fixed or in reality independent, but simply as enabling him to calculate more easily by disentangling separate sets of consequences. The social qualities are developed on the invariable condition that the self-regarding qualities exist, and *vice versâ*, and the 'best' qualities mean the best consistent with this condition. We may, as I have already said, consider any organ by itself, and, for example, say that one man has perfect lungs; but the perfection is relative to their forming part of an organism which has also a stomach, whilst the best form of stomach means also the best for a man with lungs. And precisely the same reasoning applies also to the mental or emotional faculties. Whatever distinctions may afterwards be drawn between them, we must never ignore their necessary connection or mutual implication. As the man is an individual, the process by

which he is developed is a single process; and in speaking of any one instinct, property, organ, or faculty, there is always a tacit or express reference to the whole organisation.

5. How, then, does the distinction arise? The answer may be suggested by the illustration just used. The dependence of an apple upon a tree is absolute. It admits in this sense of no degrees. I cannot say, therefore, that an apple owes certain qualities to the fact of its growing upon a tree, for it owes all its qualities to that fact. The non-tree-grown apple is a nonentity. But it is equally plain that, in another sense, the dependence admits of many degrees, for the possibility of distinguishing between the two classes implies that for some purposes they are separable. And this must mean that the apple has certain qualities which are independent of its relation to the tree, not in the sense that they would exist if that relation were abolished, but in the sense that they may vary whilst that relation remains approximately constant. In some respects I may treat of the apple as though it were an independent unity, because it may change without a corresponding change in the tree; in other respects, I can only understand the changes in the apple by taking into account its dependence upon the tree. And hence, as these properties and the proportion between them may vary in different kinds of apples, I may say that some apples are more dependent upon the tree than others; not as denying that in every case the dependence is absolute, but simply as asserting that in some cases the qualities which are only intelligible through that dependence, or which vary directly with its variation, are more prominent than others. The comparison is not drawn between an apple growing on a tree and others not growing upon trees, but between the apple in which these properties immediately dependent upon that relation are more prominent, and others in which they are less prominent. And this general statement will hold equally true in regard to the essential properties of any organism whatever.

6. Let us see, then, how this applies to the general problem of the relation between the individual and the race. There are, or there may be, organisms in which the distinction

so far disappears that we need not take it into account. Every living thing must be capable of propagating its kind, and must so far have a property useful to the race. But we may suppose the existence of organisms in which the relation between individuals is limited to this reproduction. The insect may lay eggs which come to life in the next season; the successive generations may inosculate without overlapping; whilst during life each insect may exist in complete independence of its fellows. If we further suppose that the production of eggs be essential to the insect life—which, whether an actual case or not, is a conceivable case—we should have a case in which the interests of the race and the individual would be identical. The successive individuals would be so many links in a chain, and each would potentially contain the whole series of descendants. Whatever hurt the individual would necessarily so far hurt the race. Now, it is to be observed that even in such a case the dependence of the individual upon the race is absolute. Without reproductive powers the race would not exist. And, further, since an insect with superior powers of reproduction would so far be more efficient, the type must be elaborated with reference to this condition; an increased power of locomotion might be a disadvantage on the whole if it involved a diminished power of reproduction. But we may be justified in supposing that a variation in the locomotive faculties may take place, while the reproductive power remains approximately constant. This is expressed by saying that the insect would be better so far as it could fly better. We do not for the moment attend to the collateral results; and so far the efficiency due to better flying is measurable by the results to the individual insect. Supposing the occurrence of a new form with greater powers of flight, it would so far be a superior insect as those powers adapted each insect better for obtaining food, avoiding its enemies, and so forth.

7. To advance a step, we may take the famous case of bees, which has afforded so many parallels to poets and philosophers. In such a case the sexual relations, though they cannot be more essential—for essential does not strictly admit of degrees

—are more prominent. The queen-bee, the drones, and the workers are each dependent upon the others for their continued existence. The individual insect is not intelligible by himself. The race can only be continued by the co-operation of different individuals with corresponding differences of organisation. The best insect must now mean the best relatively to the society of which it forms a part. That form of bee will flourish which forms the most efficient hives. The hive, in other words, will be the unit which must be taken into account in considering the general problem of survival. It would be therefore as idle to ask which would be the best form of bee considered apart from the hive, as it would be in the previous case to ask which would be the best form of insect considered apart from its power of reproduction; for in either case we are abstracting from an essential property. Here, again, as in the former case, we have certain faculties which may be supposed to vary whilst the social qualities remain fixed. The bees which fly better are so far better, assuming the power of flight to be gained without a compensating loss of the qualities which fit the bee for society. The difference is that we now have to consider an organism which has more functions dependent immediately upon the whole of which it forms a part, and intelligible only through that whole. The hive, we may say, is at once an aggregate and an organic whole, and we may consider it in either character for purposes of analysis, though we must not overlook the tacit implication that each set of qualities is valuable only by reference to its compatibility with the others.

8. At this point, however, occurs a consideration which is of vital importance to the argument. The individual bee, I have said, is intelligible only through its relation to the hive. Its properties, the individual as well as the social, are developed, either indirectly or directly, by reference to the constitution of the hive. Now, in every case, every quality of the organism is intelligible only through the environment. The environment of the queen-bee consists partly of the drones and working bees, and partly of the air, flowers, and so forth. It is dependent upon the one just as it is dependent upon the

other. What, then, is the reason for distinguishing? The answer is, that the distinction may or may not be of vital importance, according as we are considering one or other problem. Given the organisation of bees, the behaviour of the queen-bee, for example, will depend partly upon the flowers and partly upon the drones and working bees amongst which it is placed. So long as the organisation remains fixed, we may count both the remainder of the society and the surrounding objects as parts of the 'environment' between which it is unnecessary to make any distinction. And for many purposes this assumption is accurate. But if we consider the organisation as variable, as we must do if we are considering the problem as to the merits of a particular kind of bee, the distinction at once becomes important. For in that case an organic variation in the queen-bee necessarily supposes a correlative variation in the organisation of all other members of the hive. We cannot, for example, suppose the queen-bee to acquire better wings, without supposing a correlative change to take place in the wings of all its descendants. We may, on the other hand, suppose, and in some cases we must suppose, the flowers to remain unaltered, and to be part of the fixed conditions to which the swarm adapts itself. And hence the distinction is needless, or is vitally important, according as we are dealing with changes which do or do not imply a fixed organisation. At any given moment the organisation is fixed; if we speak of periods during which evolution introduces sensible changes, it is not fixed. But there is yet a further case. If it were admissible to suppose that the hive was capable of acquiring new properties whilst the organisation of its members remained fixed, we should be forced to introduce a reference to this varying condition also. To determine the conduct of the bee, we must know not merely its organisation and its environment, but the state of the hive. We might, again, deal with problems into which this fresh datum entered either as a constant or a variable, and we should in each case have to decide before we could lay down a satisfactory formula of bee life, which new theory did or did not involve a reference to this variability of this element. Now,

as we shall see directly, this is a consideration of essential importance in theories of human society.

## II. *Society and Man*

9. This follows from a consideration of some very familiar truths. We have sufficiently shown that we cannot make a comparison between man in a social state and the nonentity man independent of society, the real comparison being between man at an early and man at a comparatively late stage of social development. So it would be idle to discuss the effect of light upon the eye by comparing an eye which is sensitive with an eye which is not sensitive to light, for such an insensitive eye would not be an eye at all; but we may determine very profitably how the eye which is highly sensitive differs from the eye which is but slightly sensitive; and, in the parallel case, we have to compare men at remote stages of social development in order to determine the effect of this element in their constitution. Now two assumptions may be made; we may in the first place take for granted that between the savage and the civilised society there is a vast difference, including, amongst other things, the presence of a recognised and formulated moral law. It is, indeed, a question for the philosophical observer how far rudimentary systems of morality may be recognised even amongst the rudest savages; and we may assume that, as will hereafter be stated, germs of moral sentiment, the feelings and instincts which in a more highly developed state give rise to the moral law, are to be found not only amongst savages, but in some sense even at a far lower stage of development than the human. I assume simply that the explicit recognition of certain general rules of conduct, the observance or breach of which is attended with moral approval or disapproval, is comparatively a recent phenomenon. The relations of man to woman, of parents to children, of the individual to the primitive social unit, whatever it may be, exist at the lowest point of the scale, and no doubt corresponding modes of conduct were regarded with some kind of sentiment as far back as we need go in the history of the race.

But a distinct recognition of general regulative principles is only possible when the reflective and reasoning powers have become developed and some sort of theory of human life has gained acceptance. And, in the next place, we may take for granted that this difference does not imply a corresponding difference in organisation. There is no reason to suppose that the innate faculties of a modern European differ essentially, or that they differ very greatly, from those of the savages who roamed the woods in prehistoric days. There is clearly no reason to suppose that the brain of a modern English baby is intrinsically more developed than that of an ancient Athenian baby. Yet there is a vast difference in many ways between the morality of the adult Englishman and that of the adult Athenian, and still more between the morality of the Englishman and that of the Scandinavian pirate or the wielder of flint implements. It is presumable, therefore, that the moral development is not to be explained solely as corresponding to any organic change in the individual.

10. Hence, for a historical solution of the problem of the moral instincts, it would be necessary to compare man and society as it now exists with that which existed previously to the evolution of a distinct moral system, and to show how the social change had been brought about without a corresponding change in the individual organisation. In other words, we may for this purpose consider man—that is, the individual as born with certain capacities and characteristics—as approximately a constant, and then show how the society which is constituted of similar raw material comes to differ so materially in the properties of the manufactured article. To trace the process fully would be to give a complete history of morality, which is both beyond my powers and irrelevant to my immediate purpose. It will be sufficient if I consider briefly how such a process is conceivable, and what is implied in its realisation.

11. Social development takes place without a corresponding change of individual organisation. A modern gunboat could crush the fleets which fought at Salamis, and a modern child could solve problems which bewildered Archimedes: and

in whatever way we may explain this change, we certainly cannot interpret it as implying that the average child of to-day is born with faculties radically superior to those of Archimedes or of Themistocles. The change obviously depends upon the ancient and familiar truth that man can accumulate mental and material wealth; that he can learn by experience, and hand over his experience to others. It may be that germs of this capacity are to be found in the lower animals, but we shall make no sensible error if we regard it, as it has always been regarded, as the exclusive prerogative of humanity. An unreasoning animal can only adapt itself to new circumstances, except within a very narrow range, by acquiring a new organisation, or, in other words, by becoming a different animal. Its habits and instincts may therefore remain fixed through countless generations. But man, by accumulating experiences, can virtually alter both his faculties and his surroundings without altering his organisation. When this accumulation extends beyond the individual, it implies a social development, and explains the enormous changes wrought within historical times, and which define the difference between the savage and the civilised man. Let us consider for a moment some of the conclusions which may be inferred from this cardinal fact.

12. Imagine an exhaustive statement of the differences between modern England and the England of thirty centuries back—of the England inhabited by twenty millions of civilised beings and the England which was the hunting-ground of a few tribes of wandering savages. We should have to begin by noticing vast material changes—rivers embanked, marshes drained, forests felled, roads constructed, houses built, fields tilled, wolves supplanted by sheep—and making a calculation of the industrial capital and the artistic treasures accumulated. All this, we should have to observe, implies the possession not only of different materials but of a new set of tools. The modern, though not inheriting greater faculties at his birth, can compel material force to co-operate with him. He has gunpowder, steam-engines, and printing-presses where a wheeled carriage or an iron nail would have astonished his

predecessor as a miracle of art, and would have been unattainable by an equal expenditure of intellectual energy. This, again, implies the inheritance, not only of materials and of tools, but of skill. To the savage a telegraph or a book would be so much iron wire and rags. The modern has at his disposal vast accumulations of knowledge. He knows the properties of substances, the form and character of his dwelling-place, the history of his race; innumerable products of previous intellectual energy in the shape of discovered laws of nature, mathematical formulæ, philosophical, religious, and political speculation, are at his service. The knowledge existing in different times has become incomparably too vast for any single brain. Much of it, we may even say, exists in no brain, and yet is potentially there. It is externalised in countless books and papers laid up in accessible places. We inherit not merely the tangible products of labour but the methods of labour. Our ancestors transmit to us both results and the means of obtaining fresh results; they transmit their mechanical skill and their logic, although they do not transmit any modification of structure. The infant always starts at the same point of intelligence, but the path has been cleared for him, so that he can reach an enormously more distant goal. A child is not born a clockmaker now any more than he was three thousand years ago, but not the less does he inherit the power of making clocks.

13. The most striking illustration of this process is to be found in language. Language is clearly a product of the social organism in this sense, that its development does not imply any essential change of the organs, but a social development. It was not bestowed upon men from without, nor is it a necessary product of our organisation, or worked out by each man for himself. It has been gradually elaborated from some simple germ by the race under the pressure of social needs; and each child accepts it as a ready-made instrument from his nurse and transmits it to his successors, impressing upon it at rare intervals some relatively trifling improvement. If we notice how much a child learns in simply learning to speak, we shall see how much it owes to the society in which

it is placed. To learn to speak is to learn a number of signs with which to fix in the memory a number of things or aspects of things which would else be forgotten, and to enable ourselves to recall them easily to the memory of others, and to have them recalled by others. It is, again, to have both outward objects and the emotions which they excite arranged in groups, so as to facilitate the reproduction of old impressions and to render accurate and speedy the complex processes involved in every act of reflection. Language is so essential an instrument of learning, that it is very difficult for the mature mind to conceive of any but the simplest process of thought taking place without it. Thus in learning a language we learn a logic; for the structure of language is determined by the elementary methods of reasoning, which in its turn determines the methods of those who speak it. As every instrument supposes certain methods of using it, the mechanism of language implies the acquisition of corresponding mental habits. Thus, again, language implies the unconscious absorption of a philosophy, as is abundantly clear to any one who will trace the use of such words as *matter*, *form*, *substance*, *spirit*, and so forth, and observe how all speculation has started from the attempt to analyse what was already implicitly given by words embodying previous results of thought. We are metaphysicians in the cradle, and distinguish object and subject by methods instilled into us by our nurses. We start with an implicit psychology, as the names of the various emotions imply a rough classification of the primary elements of character. The same is true to some extent of every branch of inquiry. The child learns the Ptolemaic system of astronomy as soon as he can talk about the moon and the stars. A philosopher who wishes to introduce a new conception has to invent a new terminology, which is yet always a modification of the old symbols, and in the very act imposes fetters on his own mind, and provides moulds in which thought is to run hereafter. Often, it need hardly be said, he introduces some insidious sophistry from which it is very difficult to escape. Philosophy is in great measure a series of attempts to escape from the erroneous

conceptions thus tacitly introduced in the very earliest forms of speech. And, finally, it may be observed that language naturally affects our feelings as well as our conceptions. Words not merely denote an object, but associate it with certain emotions. We catch the subtle contagion of prejudice from the language which it has impregnated. We hate a race because its name has been used as a term of abuse. Papist amongst Protestants, heretic amongst Catholics, Jew amongst Christians, are words which have been used to propagate bitter hatred combined with an almost complete ignorance of the hated object. Briefly, to teach a child to speak is to educate it, to prepare it for association with others, to lay it open to all manner of influences, to start it with a mass of knowledge already elaborately organised, to teach it methods of thinking and imagining, to insinuate into its mind philosophical and religious principles, and to inoculate it with innumerable associations which must be important elements in the development of its character.

14. The child, then, starts with an organisation for thinking and speaking as the bird leaves the egg with the organs of flying or swimming. Whether and in what sense this organisation is the product of a previous elaboration is not at this point a relevant question. In each case, at any rate, the infant starts with certain faculties. But the essential difference is clear. The eagle learns to fly, the duck to swim, the child to walk, as eagles, ducks, and children have flown, swum, and walked since the species appeared; from the organisation we can safely infer the function; but in the case of language this is no longer true. The child as it grows up inherits not only the faculties, but the modifications and elaborations of its faculties which have been developed by the society in which it lives. Its organs of speech, its intellectual powers, might be equal to those of Homer or Plato; but if Homer or Plato had been born amongst the Hottentots, they could no more have composed the 'Iliad' or the 'Dialogues' than Beethoven could have composed his music, however fine his ear or delicate his organisation, in the days when the only musical instrument was the tom-tom. The instrument,

whether it has or has not a material embodiment, is equally essential in both cases. The analogy of vocal music would serve as well as that of instrumental. The art of singing has to be created by the labours of successive generations of musically endowed generations, whether the instrument be the human throat or the fiddle. Hence, the activity of the individual is essentially conditioned, not merely by his individual organisation, but by the social medium. His predecessors have created a new world. The physical basis may be the same, but the man develops under a set of influences which profoundly affect his intellect, his emotions, and his activities. The material world is not more altered by cultivating fields and manufacturing tools than the world of thought by the development of language and all that system of logically organised methods of reasoning which determine the lines of discharge of intellectual energy.

15. Human conduct, then, depends essentially upon the social factor; we must study the properties of the social as well as of the individual organism in order to understand it; and in this is already implied a further condition of vital importance. The individual, that is, is dependent at every moment upon his contemporaries as well as upon his ancestors. When I have learnt a language, I have an instrument which will serve me in solitude. I can sit down in my study and speculate or imagine as I please. My thoughts, it is true, are modified at every instant by the instrument elaborated by others, but the instrument remains, when once acquired, a constant factor. But this, of course, is an infinitesimal part of the ordinary use of language. As it has been developed by the need of communication, it also serves at every moment as a means of communication, and it is as governing my relation to my fellows that it exercises the most palpable and continuous influence; and this is equally true of all the other social faculties. Almost every action of my life is dependent more or less directly upon the co-operation of others, and the more so as I become more civilised. I cannot think without assuming the knowledge attained by others. I see that my fire is low; I feel that I am too cold; I infer that I should put

on coals. Even in so simple a case I use inherited results of the experience of others, and especially of the great discovery of fire and its properties. But I am also dependent upon the continued co-operation of others. I could not arrange the details of a day's work without taking into account the conduct and the continuous action, for example, of those processes which determine my supply of coal. I cannot think to any purpose without taking for granted the veracity and intelligence of innumerable fellow-men, and fitting my own results into the vast mass of results attained by others. Each individual, in whatever department he labours, assumes that others are labouring in tacit or express co-operation. If millions can live in a region which formerly supported a few thousands, it is because each of the millions has millions of co-operators. If I can devote myself to write an ethical treatise, it is because thousands of people all over the world are working to provide me with food and clothes, and a variety of intellectual and material products. If another man lives by putting one brick on another, it is because he can trust the discharge of other essential functions to the numerous classes who are contributing more or less directly to his support, protection, and instruction. Briefly—for it is useless to dwell upon this familiar topic—the growth of society implies that division of functions which has been more or less recognised by every one who has considered the question since the dawn of speculation. This vast social organisation is the work of a vast series of generations unconsciously fashioning the order which they transmit to their descendants. It is only necessary to take note of the familiar fact, because some of the consequences which it implies have been neglected or insufficiently emphasised. Briefly, society exists as it exists in virtue of this organisation, which is as real as the organisation of any material instrument, though it depends upon habits and instincts instead of arrangements of tangible and visible objects.

16. It is, again, obvious that as every man is born and brought up as a member of this vast organisation, his character is throughout moulded and determined by its peculiarities. It is the medium in which he lives, as much as

the air which he breathes or the water which he drinks. And this implies not merely, from the facts already noted, that his intellectual furniture, his whole system of beliefs, prejudices, and so forth, are in a great degree acquired by direct transference, and that consciously or unconsciously he imbibes the current beliefs and logical methods of his fellows, but also that he is educated from infancy by the necessity of conforming his activities to those of the surrounding mass. If his feelings or beliefs bring him into conflict with his neighbours, he is constantly battered and hammered into comparative uniformity. To deviate from the beaten track is to expose oneself to incessant collisions. If it is the custom to keep to the right in a street, I can only go to the left at the risk of being trodden under foot. And though some results of this process are lamented by many reasoners, it is clear that in some degree it is a necessary condition of all progress. It is as necessary to conform to certain rules as to accept certain beliefs. If I insisted upon trying for myself the effect of every kind of food, I should not survive my first crucial experiment upon arsenic. If I deviate from ordinary rules, I so far deprive myself of the advantages of co-operation, because my neighbours are unable to foresee my conduct or to act in harmony with me. If I insist upon dining only in the middle of the day, I am so far debarred from society; if I object to the ordinary forms of worship, I cannot have the stimulus of common prayer. If to gain the advantages I accept the rules, my character is modified accordingly. Be the result bad or good, all organisation implies uniformities of conduct, and therefore continuous discipline. We are born, not into a chaotic crowd, but into an organised army, and we must learn to keep step and rank, and to obey orders. But to appreciate more clearly the nature of the discipline, we must consider some broad facts as to the constitution of the army.

17. Sociology treats of the social organism, and those considerations already set down may serve to show what is meant by this statement, and how far the word is used in the same sense when we speak of the individual and the social organism. It is enough to say here, that it implies at least

that some important rules are equally applicable in both cases. It is as true that man is dependent upon his fellows as that a limb is dependent upon the body. It would be as absurd to ask what would be the properties of a man who was not a product of the race, as to ask what would be the properties of a leg not belonging to an animal; or to ask what would be the best type of man without considering his place in society, as to ask what would be the best kind of leg without asking whether it belonged to a hare or a tortoise. And in the next place, it is true that the properties of a society cannot be deduced from the independent properties of its members in the same sense as it is true that the properties of any living body cannot be deduced from the mechanical and chemical properties of the elements of which it is composed. Destroy the life in either case, and the remaining properties of the dead materials do not enable us to assign their properties when forming an associated whole. We cannot infer the properties of a society by supposing it to be an aggregate of beings independent of society, because such beings are mere nonentities. The residue, when you had abstracted from it all social qualities, would in any case be merely the material elements, the hydrogen, carbon, and so forth, to which the body may be reduced; and from these you could infer neither the individual nor the society. But further, any given society has properties of its own which cannot be deduced from those properties of the individual which are common to men in all social states, for those properties may, as we have seen, remain constant when the social organisation varies. The inference from the part to the whole would be as impossible as the inference to the properties of any given animal from the tissues which it possesses in common with other animals. The properties depend upon the way in which they are combined, and we therefore require other data to determine the results of the combination. It is, therefore, necessary to speak of society as an organism or an organic growth which has in some sense a life of its own. And this, it is to be repeated, implies no mystical or non-natural sense. Society is not an organism with a single centre of consciousness. It is not something

which has any existence apart from the existence of the individual members. But the name marks the essential fact, that although at any time the properties of the constituted whole are the product of the constituting units, those units have gained their properties in virtue of belonging to this whole. The society as a whole acquires new characteristics at different stages of growth which are only explicable through its history; and therefore, though we may properly speak of any particular social phenomena as resulting solely from the character of the individual agents, we must also tacitly assume that their character is to be dependent upon their relations to a society at the given stage of growth. We may no doubt try to explain this fact by assuming that latent properties have existed in the individual at earlier stages, as we may suppose that the material elements of a body have latent properties which only reveal themselves through the vital union. But since we can only know them as they are manifested, we can only give an intelligible account of the society by regarding them as properties of the social organism. The phrase 'latent property' is only intelligible as marking the fact that a man (or a baby), if transplanted from one society to another, would acquire the corresponding characteristics, which is, indeed, assumed in our statement. So that, whatever the ultimate facts, we must be prepared to find qualities developed through the social union which are not immediately deducible from the properties of the individual without reference to that union. The necessity of this assumption and of the corresponding terminology will appear as we proceed.

### III. *Social Organisation*

18. An organism implies organs. The society, like the individual, has its organs of self-defence and nutrition, its apparatus corresponding to the brain, the stomach, and so forth, though it would be absurd to press the analogy too far. There is this much resemblance, at any rate, that the society develops associations each of which has its separate function, and implies the development of corresponding associations

with other functions. Political, ecclesiastical, and industrial organs become more distinct and more interdependent as society advances. These organs, indeed, are neither mutually exclusive nor generally conterminous in respect of the individuals who compose them. Every man may be, and generally is, a member of several organs. He may belong to a church, a state, a commercial company, and so forth. Sometimes membership of one may be incompatible with membership of another, especially of the same kind; but the various associations overlap in complex ways, and do not imply, so to speak, a fissure down to the foundations. Industrial associations may be formed of the subjects of different states. The map of Europe would differ according as we marked the ecclesiastical or the political divisions. Englishmen belong to many churches, and the Catholic Church includes subjects of many states. And, of course, each organ, though it may be regarded as a unit for some purposes, is for others a highly complex structure; as, for example, the state includes military, judicial, and administrative organs, each of which is again an organised structure.

19. Now, although this division into organs or associations does not correspond to a division of society into separate groups, but to a division of the various activities of a single group, it is equally true that each organ may be regarded as having in some sense a life of its own. It persists as a body persists in spite of, or rather in virtue of, a continuous change in the constituent particles. The associations graduate by indefinite degrees from the most ephemeral and accidental up to the most permanent and essential. Man, according to the old formula, is naturally a social animal. Whenever two men meet there is the germ of a possible alliance or antagonism. The most trivial bond may serve. Two travellers who happen to meet in crossing a ferry have already a certain community of interest. They are liable to common dangers and have a certain sympathy. If they are passed by another boat, they will regard the other travellers as rivals, and be prepared to take a pride in the success of the embryo society, even in defiance of the reflection that their own merits have no influence upon its success. Johnson's hatred of the 'dockers,'

when, for the moment, he adopted the local prejudices of Plymouth, is a humorous illustration of a general principle. The germs of association are everywhere present, and every temporary cohesion supplies the necessary medium for their rapid development. There are, indeed, two cases which correspond to very different kinds of association. We may regard the human organisation with no more interest than we should feel for a material instrument. We may regard a servant, as we regard the bell which summons him, as a food-bringing machine. A master may regard his slaves with the same feeling as he regards his horses or his ploughs. They are simply means to an end, and the association would vanish if the end were no longer desirable. In the opposite case, we sometimes reverse the process, and come to entertain for material instruments some of the affection which is normally the product of sympathy; but the feeling springs up naturally, and acquires importance when we have to do with our fellows. In such cases the corporate feeling ceases to have any accurate proportion to our desire for the ostensible end of the association. The man loves the school in which he has been brought up with very little reference to its merit as an educational institution. We come to love a corporate body as though it were a real person. We speak of a church or a state as 'she,' and when we are told that a corporation has no soul, the remark strikes us as if it were the revelation of a new and unsuspected truth. The ostensible end of an association is often the least part of its value for us. We really love it because it supplies us with a means of cultivating certain emotions and of enjoying the society of our fellows; and it would be an entirely inadequate account of the whole statement if we regarded it as simply the means of attaining that pleasure which has given the pretext for its formation.

20. The corporate sentiment thus developed is more complex and less capable of analysis in those associations of which we have become members without any conscious volition. When we have been brought up from our infancy as members of a state or church, or have been made members of some society before the age of reflection, our emotions and activities

become so thoroughly identified with those of the body, that we are incapable of assigning any specific end as supplying the dominant motive. The sentiment, for example, of patriotism is one which defies analysis. The state, we may say, discharges a certain social function. According to some theorists, it is useful simply as a means of protecting its members against violence. Even upon this supposition the corresponding sentiment would be complex, inasmuch as a desire for protection implies a desire for gratifying any of the instincts which might expose us to danger. But the bare desire for protection would be a very inadequate explanation of the emotion roused by the thought of a man's native country, which possesses a complexity of a far higher order, and seems to be an instinct in which every part of his nature is more or less directly concerned. It may possibly be true that if the need of protection could be removed the instinct would decay, but in any case it has an independent vitality, the conditions and nature of which could only be unravelled by elaborate psychological and historical investigation. At the opposite end of the scale are generally the industrial associations, which generate very little corporate sentiment. The actual co-operation which exists between different parts of the industrial mechanism calls out very little distinctive sentiment towards the whole association. The end always remains distinct. A bank, for example, is a highly important part of the machinery by which one set of people are enabled to co-operate in the industrial occupations of another set. But although the utility of the bank is the cause of its persistence, the banker and his customers on both sides are not induced to carry on their operations by any conscious desire for their neighbours' advantage, but simply by a desire for their own comfort. Each man confines his view of consequences to himself. His intention is simply to keep or acquire wealth. By doing so he facilitates the operations of his neighbours for the same purpose; but he does not, or need not, think of that result at all, any more than the farmer in clearing the ground considers the interests of the cattle which he is about to raise. Their interests coincide with his own up to a certain point, at

any rate; but he is not prompted by any sympathy with their feelings.

21. But this difference does not necessarily or generally affect the power of such persistence of the organ. An elaborate industrial organisation is necessary to the life of a civilised nation, and each member of the nation is interested in maintaining it; and thus it is maintained, although it may be that no man feels any more enthusiasm about a bank or a railway company, considered as a factitious person, than he does about a steam-engine or a printing machine. Though merely machines, they are necessary machines. In any case, too, another conclusion is equally manifest. Every association, that is, to whatever type it belongs, necessarily implies the existence of certain more general instincts dependent upon the whole social development. If any social organ were or could be conditioned by a separate instinct; if it supplied the means by which alone one specific faculty of our nature could find its gratification, then a study of that instinct or faculty would be the study of the corresponding organ. Or rather, the study of one or the other would be stated as inner and outer, as being objective and subjective theories of the same phenomena. But it is plain that this does not correspond to the facts. The church, for example, depends upon the religious instinct. It will flourish or decay with the rise and fall of all that is implied in that name. But the religious instinct is the name of a highly complex set of sentiments which have other manifestations than that of the ecclesiastical organisation, and depend upon much wider conditions than those to which it is subject in that capacity. The religion of a country depends, amongst other things, upon the growth of speculation, upon the philosophical and scientific conceptions which have established themselves, and which react in countless ways upon the beliefs which we call religious, and the practices to which those beliefs give rise. So, again, the state depends upon the loyalty of its members; but the sentiment which we call loyalty is again involved in innumerable ways with all the other modes of social development. It is closely bound up with religious beliefs, as the decay of a religion may involve a

decay of the political order which shares its sanctity. Every political change has an ecclesiastical reaction; whilst in the other direction, again, the development or decay of political institutions is closely connected with the changes in the industrial organisation. The existence of complex industrial mechanism implies necessarily the existence of a mutual confidence. It could not exist unless men were ready to trust their fortunes to their neighbours, and to rely in various ways upon their co-operation. This implies the existence of a political order in which peace will be preserved and contracts enforced. And further, there is a close connection between the industrial state and the political and religious condition of a country, as the state of prosperity or misery of the mass of the population has a direct and vitally important bearing upon their relations to their rulers and teachers. Briefly, therefore, we may say that the existence of any specific organ implies the existence of an organism provided with other organs discharging correlative functions; and therefore it implies the existence, not only of a certain instinct to which it owes its own vitality, but the existence of more general instincts to which it is related as a special manifestation to a general sentiment.

22. Let us recapitulate these conclusions for a moment, with a view to their bearing on our problem. We have seen that the various properties characteristic of a given social state may be regarded as corresponding to three successive degrees of generality. For, in the first place, we have those properties which belong to a society in so far as it consists of men, that is, of men organised as men are now organised, or, since we have assumed that this may be regarded as a constant element, of the properties which belong to all societies since a period antecedent to the growth of an explicit moral system. In the second place, we may consider the properties of a society at any given stage—and of course I shall speak generally of the civilised man of the present day—in so far as they depend upon these primary instincts, when modified and converted into a virtually new set of instincts by social development and inheritance. These instincts must be common to all societies

at that stage, and to the members of such societies whatever their special relations to the society. And, thirdly, we have yet another set of properties which belong to the society as organised, and which are still modifications of the more general instincts, but which correspond to the particular organs into which the society is distributed. Thus, to take a particular example, we may consider a man in so far as he is born with certain sensibilities which render him capable of sympathy with his neighbours. These sensibilities, by the hypothesis, may be found in the rude as well as in the more civilised state; but in the higher state they will give rise to what may be called a new set of faculties and instincts in virtue of the process already described: the savage chief is transformed into the civilised statesman. But, in the next place, the instincts so developed will qualify him for being a member of various forms of association, political, ecclesiastical, and so forth, and, as acted upon by the special circumstances in which he is placed, will again determine his fitness for one of these functions rather than another, and further for some particular type of ecclesiastical, political, or industrial organisation. And in each case, it must be observed, the more special form of instinct must be regarded as conditioned by the more general; not as if they were separate forces, one of which must be conceived as controlling the other, but simply as implying that the particular is an embodiment of the general under certain specific circumstances, and that the general rule must therefore be stated independently of the particular case, as including, not as controlling it; and further, that the conditions upon which, in fact, the existence of the general instinct depends must always be more general than those which are given in the particular manifestation.

23. The grounds for this distinction have perhaps been sufficiently indicated; the reason for insisting upon them may appear more clearly by introducing another consideration. It is impossible, as has been sufficiently said, to determine the properties of any given society directly from the innate properties of the individual members. We must regard its properties, and thus the special characteristics of its various

organs, as determined by those properties which are developed through the social union. But, again, we cannot determine these organs directly from the social properties of the individual; for, in fact, it is plain that the organs are differently constituted according to the special environment. In other words, the existence of a particular political order implies necessarily the existence of a certain stage of social development; but the inference cannot be inverted. Each social stage is compatible with many forms of political organisation according to the circumstances in which it is placed. Under one set of circumstances there is a greater, and under others a less degree of centralisation; in one country the democratic, and in another the aristocratic, element may be more prominent, and this without any important difference in the intimate or underlying social constitution. The various forms of political organisation possible at a given stage are related as varieties to a species, which may differ slightly, though by altering the circumstances each might be transformed into the other. The deeper and more permanent characteristics are manifested under certain relations in the political; under others in the industrial organs, and so forth; and, again, they may be compatible with varying conformations in each particular manifestation.

### IV. *Social Tissue*

24. In order to mark this distinction, I will venture to speak—applying an obvious analogy—of social 'tissue.' The tissue is built up of men, as the tissue of physiology is said to be built up of cells. Every society is composed of such tissue; and the social tissue can no more exist apart from such associations than the physiological tissue exist apart from the organs of living animals. The distinction does not correspond to things separable as concrete phenomena, nor can it be compared to the distinction between a coat and the cloth of which it is made; for unorganised social tissue does not exist, and the tissue develops new properties according to the mode in which it is arranged. Thus, if you will, the distinction may be regarded as merely a logical device; and yet,

without taking into account in some form or other the facts which it is intended to describe, it seems impossible to give an adequate account of the process which we have to consider.

25. The process is the social evolution. The typical organism is by our assumption that organism which is best fitted for all the conditions of life, or, in other words, which has the strongest vitality. Now the difficulty which meets us in attempting to extend to human society the principle which may be accepted as regulating the evolution of infra-human species is the difficulty of determining the units. The theory of evolution cannot be clearly apprehended or applied to this case until this point is settled; for every such theory supposes a double set of processes. Every change involves on the one hand a readjustment of the organic equilibrium within the organism and a readjustment of its relations to the external world. The two processes are in constant correspondence, and each is regulated by the other. But we should manifestly fall into hopeless confusion if we did not know what was the unit of operation. Since the process is one in which certain changes are mutually implied, so that to suppose one to take place without another is to suppose impossibilities, it is obviously essential to determine as far as we can the limits of the organic solidarity. We might otherwise fall into the absurdity of considering the evolution of legs without taking into account the correlative changes of the rest of the organism.

26. Now the difficulty scarcely reveals itself in the evolutionist theories as applied to the lower species. We assume an organic change to occur—no matter how—in certain individuals of a species, and that change to be inherited by their descendants; and thus two competing varieties to arise, one of which may be supplanted by the other, or each of which may supplant the other in a certain part of the common domain. Some such process is clearly occurring in the case of human variations. Everywhere we see a competition between different races, and the more savage tribes vanishing under the approach of the more civilised. Certain races seem to possess enormous expansive powers, whilst others remain

limited within fixed regions or are slowly passing out of existence. So far as human development supposes an organic change in the individual, we may suppose that this process is actually going on, and that, for example, the white man may be slowly pushing savage races out of existence. I do not ask whether this is the fact, because for my purpose it is irrelevant. We are considering the changes which take place without such organic developments, not as denying the existence of organic developments, but simply because they are so slow and their influence so gradual that they do not come within our sphere. They belong, as astronomers say, to the secular, not to the periodic changes. Confining ourselves, therefore, to the changes which are, in my phrase, products of the 'social factor,' and which assume the constancy of the individual organism, we have to ask what is the unit? And here the theory of variation just stated seems to require some modification.

27. Suppose, in fact, that an individual acquires a new instinct or faculty in the sense already explained. He makes, let us suppose, a scientific discovery which gives a fresh command over the natural forces. Or we may suppose that a change is brought about in the social machinery which substitutes friendly co-operation for a state of antagonism, and therefore of wasted energy. What will be the effect of such a change upon the society in which it occurs? Obviously it will have an effect strictly analogous in one respect to that of the organic change. Improved artillery, like improved teeth, will enable the group to which it belongs to extirpate or subdue its competitors. But in another respect there is an obvious difference. For the improved teeth belong only to the individuals in whom they appear and to the descendants to whom they are transmitted by inheritance; but the improved artillery may be adopted by a group of individuals who form a continuous society with the original inventor. The invention by one is thus in certain respects an invention by all, though the laws according to which it spreads will of course be highly complex. It may be confined to a particular class or nation, or it may spread through the whole race so

far as it has reached the necessary stage of development. To find an analogy in the case of the individual we must imagine some molecular change to occur in one part of the organism and to spread by some kind of fermentation or contagion throughout the whole frame. And further, it may briefly be noted that any such change, like the organic change, involves a whole series of correlative changes; as the invention of artillery had a profound effect upon the social and political organisation of Europe, or as the development of more effective teeth more or less alters the whole constitution of the animal race in which it occurs. And this suggests that, for certain purposes at least, the whole race, or the whole race which has arrived at a certain stage, must be regarded as a single organism, or rather a continuous organic growth, and that any modification arising in one part is propagated throughout the whole system.

28. It is indeed clear that this process does not exclude the action of the 'struggle for existence.' An invention, that is to say, is propagated, in part at least, because the possession gives an advantage to the possessors. When one people has big guns or effective steam-engines, another people makes them in order to hold its own in the commercial and political competition. But there is the important difference that the other race *can* make them. If some animals acquire better teeth, their rivals cannot at once improve their teeth in order to meet the new difficulty; but men in the same social state can adopt the same inventions. And, moreover, the process takes place in great part by a direct method. A new discovery spreads through the social tissue as a fermentation spreads through a continuous fluid. It is always regulated by the struggle for existence. Beliefs which give greater power to their holders have so far a greater chance of spreading as pernicious beliefs would disappear by facilitating the disappearance of their holders. This, however, expresses what we may call a governing or regulative condition, and does not give the immediate law of diffusion. A theory spreads from one brain to another in so far as one man is able to convince another, which is a direct process, whatever its ultimate nature,

and has its own laws underlying the general condition which determines the ultimate survival of different systems of opinion.

29. This, at any rate, is enough to show that it is of vital importance to understand what are the conditions of this mutual accessibility. In so far as one part of the race is continuous with another, and can directly receive any modifications which may arise elsewhere, the race must be considered as forming for some purposes a unit, though for other purposes it may still be a multitude of mutually competing individuals. The problem would be simple if we were entitled to regard the race as broken up into independent groups—a case partly noticed in the case of some savage tribes. In this case nations would be only related as hostile units, the existence of each being maintained by a constant struggle against its neighbours, and new inventions or beliefs being incapable of spreading beyond its borders. A modification due to the social factor would be for our purposes in the same position as an organic modification. The discovery of a new weapon or the growth of stronger teeth would equally give an advantage to the group in which it occurred (assuming it to be diffused through that group), and we might regard the group as a unit in our reasoning. Those groups would survive in either case which were the most powerful in the struggle for existence, or in relation to all external circumstances, including its hostile neighbours. Now it is impossible to regard political states as forming in this sense ultimate social units. It is true that the struggle for existence of the race which corresponds to a general regulative condition may occasionally lead to an internecine struggle between nations. One survives by extirpating its neighbour. But this is no longer the case in any moderately civilised state of the world. War is there a comparatively subordinate phenomenon. It is part of a larger series of events. War decides how races are to be grouped, not which race is to survive: or sometimes it merely decides what are to be the commercial and other relations between different groups. A conquest is the extinction of a political organisation, and the commonest result is that the qualities of the resulting

group are determined as much by those of the conquered as by those of the conquerors. The race is not extirpated but incorporated. The struggle for existence still necessarily implies the supplanting of the weaker by the stronger, and is therefore not represented by the international struggle, which must be taken rather as the means by which certain relatively superficial organisations are determined, though this organisation, again, will have a bearing upon the general process of which it is a part.

30. This, again, falls in with a remark already made. If, in fact, we could take states for units, and regard their struggles as the manifestation of the struggle for existence, it would follow that the problem worked out by that struggle would be identical with the problem of the best form of state. I do not mean to say that even upon this hypothesis the qualities of the group, considered under its political aspect, would give an exhaustive statement of its characteristics; for, in any case, its relation to other groups would be in every case only a part of its relations to the whole external world, and its power of maintaining itself would also depend upon its power of obtaining food and so forth. But the military power would always be the essential criterion of its efficiency, since its life would depend at every moment upon its power of satisfying the condition of military efficiency. Its capacity for holding its own in the struggle would be the central faculty round which all others would cluster. But this, it is plain, would give a totally inadequate result. For the best form of state, like the best form of army, is relative to the general stage of social development, as the best form of leg is relative to the organism in which it is included: and thus the external pressure, though it may always supply one condition, supplies only one amongst many. To state the case fully, we should require to know many other properties of equal importance, and directly dependent upon an entirely different set of conditions, such as the industrial capacity of the state, its geographical position, and so forth. A state, in fact, may be developed when the external pressure is little or nothing. The English constitution has no doubt been pro-

foundly modified by the relation to foreign states; but if for a certain period all communication with the outside world had been absolutely prohibited, the English people would still have developed under different conditions to some different result. The conditions which would have determined their organisation are still of the highest importance, and require to be taken into account when controlled or modified by the influence of external relations. Hence—though it may be superfluous to insist upon a tolerably obvious conclusion—we should be led into hopeless confusion if we identified the so-called social organism with states, regarded them as the units in our calculation, and considered that the special modifications were all directly determined and moulded under the influence of the mutual competition.

31. We may thus consider the race as forming what is called a social organism, or, as I have preferred to say, as forming social tissue. The reason for preferring the latter phrase is simply that it implies a different kind of unity. To use the word 'organism' is to suggest that the whole body is capable of combining its efforts in order to bring about some common end; as we may say (with certain reservations) that a whole nation may combine to carry on a war or a single society to build a house. We cannot in this sense predicate unity of the so-called organism. It is continuous but has not this unity. Its limits are fixed not by its internal constitution but by external circumstances. It therefore is not analogous to the higher organism which forms a whole separated from all similar wholes, but to an organism of the lower type, which consists of mutually connected parts spreading independently in dependence upon external conditions and capable of indefinite extension, not of united growth. The unity which we attribute to it consists in this, that every individual is dependent upon his neighbours, and thus every modification arising in one part is capable of being propagated directly in every other part. The so-called organs, again, correspond to special combinations of parts of the tissue, the configuration of which is determined by the special circumstances in which it is placed, the physical geography of its habitat, and so forth,

but which do not so break it up into distinct fragments as to destroy its continuity. The organs which we call states correspond to the most prominent and most deeply marked lines of distinction; but even this demarcation is still relatively superficial. The relations between members of different states are by no means those of simple antagonism, but also of direct sympathy and cohesion.

32. If, now, we ask how the struggle for existence will manifest itself, the answer follows from the considerations already set forth. There is, in the first place, a constant competition, more or less overt, between different parts of the race, which may or may not coincide with the struggle between different nations. If we limit ourselves for a moment to a fixed area inhabited by a strictly homogeneous race, implying, therefore, a particular 'social tissue,' we have the case of what may be called Malthusian competition. Given the faculties and character of the race, there is room for a certain quantity of population. It resembles an elastic body pressing steadily against fixed limits. So far as it accumulates capital or acquires new capacities, there is room for a larger population. If, on the other hand, we suppose its sensibilities to increase or its standard of comfort to be raised, or, in other words, that it refuses to accept existence except upon higher terms, there will be room for a smaller population. And perhaps I may add—though I cannot here discuss the importance of the consideration—that an inverse rule may sometimes hold good. The increase of population in a given area may sometimes be an advantage, in so far as it facilitates a more elaborate organisation. A million people may be able to live better in a given space than a thousand, because they will be able to establish a better division of labour, and, so to speak, to tell off more labourers to some essential purpose. Still, however intricate the problem, the data are determinate. It is usually a question of the maintenance of an equilibrium of a certain kind and quantity of social tissue, that is, of men endowed with certain faculties, amongst which this power of forming organised associations is one of the most important, under fixed external circumstances.

33. When we extend the hypothesis to represent the actual race, when we suppose the possibility of extension into different areas and the competition with different races, the conditions increase in complexity. Considering only the question of the competition of races, which is the problem which concerns us, it may obviously take various forms. Thus, if we suppose the competing races to represent different stages of social development or to be composed of different tissue, the competition may be one of extermination. The feebler race may vanish before the approach of its stronger rivals, as savage tribes vanish from Australia and America. Such extermination, it may be added, need not imply direct slaughter, but simply the gradual asphyxiation of a race by confinement within narrower limits, and the loss of energy which seems to result when the power of expansion is destroyed ; but it may be one of subordination, as weaker races have become the slaves of their superiors, or, in some cases, their dependents without being in the full sense slaves ; or, finally, it may be one of assimilation, which is manifested in the relations between races at nearly equal stages of civilisation. For, as in this case, we may suppose the innate faculties to be approximately identical, and probably the acquired faculties to be not very widely different, the race which is put under a stress by the competition of its neighbours will end by acquiring their capacities, and the equilibrium will be restored instead of one being extirpated. The varieties of circumstance are, of course, indefinite, and may modify the result in a thousand ways. For us, however, it is enough to note one essential fact, namely, that to give any intelligible account of the process, we are forced to bear in mind the distinction already drawn between the fundamental properties in virtue of which the race belongs to a certain kind of social tissue, and those relatively superficial properties which are implied in the particular organisation. Wherever there is mutual pressure between two parts of a race, we should first have to consider how far they consisted of the same or of different social tissue; for upon this it would depend whether the struggle should be one of extirpation or assimilation ; and, secondly, if the issue

of the struggle should in any particular case depend upon various conditions, amongst which of course must be reckoned the special organisation of the competing societies. Thus a nation inferior in its intrinsic qualities may be able to extirpate its superiors because it has great advantages of numbers and of geographical position. Or, again, the industrial organisation may determine whether a particular group will be absorbed by its neighbours or remain in an isolated position. Now, in any case, we can only speak of the merits of any particular organ with a tacit or explicit reference to the qualities of the constituent tissue. The military power is due not simply to the fact that a nation has numerous armies, but that it has the qualities which enable it to organise numerous armies; and thus its military power is always relative to the more intrinsic and general qualities. And, secondly, we may assume that, although in many particular cases the more civilised may be supplanted by the less civilised, the race of higher intrinsic qualities by that of lower qualities, these accidental and contingent advantages will be eliminated on the average, and the general tendency will be to the predominance of those races which have intrinsically the strongest tissue.

34. And now, putting aside this question of competition between races at a different stage of development, we may observe that the same principles apply in the case where we assume a perfect continuity or homogeneity of tissue. We must still, that is, distinguish between the tissue and the organ; for in every case we assume that some evolution is and has been taking place. Many races, perhaps the numerical majority of all races, are indeed in a stationary state; but in any case where any morality exists we must suppose that there has been an evolution of the kind in question (that is, independent of organic changes in the individual) in the past, as there may be in the future. Such evolution, it is possible, may have its limits. There may be a period, though for many reasons it would seem to be indefinitely distant, at which everything has been made out of the given materials which is possible, and at which further progress is therefore possible

only on the hypothesis of an organic change. In any case, and whatever the stage of evolution or the rapidity with which it is proceeding, the changes which have occurred or are occurring are made possible through the inheritance of instincts and faculties from our ancestors, used for application to new purposes. Intellectual growth is conceivable so long as we are able to acquire the knowledge already formulated, and to extend it over fresh provinces; and it seems impossible to fix any limits to this process, especially when we take into account the division of intellectual labour made possible by the social factor. In every case, again, the race considered as a whole has to maintain its equilibrium in the general system of nature, and the particular organisation which is the necessary condition of maintaining as well as of extending the dominion of the race at large must always be considered relatively to those properties which have already become organic in the race. The efficiency of any given organ whatever must be estimated relatively to the organic properties which are the product of a previous evolution, though at any given period they may be stationary; and to determine the laws of variation, which include the case in which the equilibrium is simply preserved without being altered, we must always distinguish between these intrinsic qualities and their more special modes of application. This is a logical necessity, in whatever sense it may correspond to phenomena separable in fact.

35. There remains an important question upon which something must be said. For it may be asked, what are the characteristics in virtue of which we should declare that two races are or are not of identical social tissue? The question is one which does not admit of a precise answer any more than the parallel question, what amounts to a specific difference as distinguished from mere individual differences or differences between varieties? It is a question of fact, where the facts graduate by imperceptible degrees. We might perhaps accept as a sufficient criterion the capacity of different races to blend with each other. The organisation of individuals would be regarded as identical when one individual could be transplanted into another race with perfect facility. The same

test should be applicable to the social organism. The experiments which have been tried upon a vast scale in America would afford ample illustrations. When streams of population, all drawn from every part of the European continent, are poured into a common receptacle, they rapidly blend together, so that all distinction rapidly disappears. The difference is maintained for a time by such differences as those between modern languages, which we may call accidental because they correspond to no essential social difference. They can speedily be removed, and each race readily accepts the political and other modes of organisation which it finds in the existing organism. On the other hand, the process is exceedingly slow in the case of some races separated by more fundamental distinctions. The Chinese and the negro remain side by side with the other populations instead of speedily losing their separate identity. In such cases there is presumably a difference of tissue, although it must be observed that so long as there is no organic difference sufficient to make fusion impossible, the acquired instincts may gradually be adopted by one stream of population, and thus they may be assimilated to their neighbours, with the result either of supplanting one kind of tissue by the other, or of forming a third, differing in some respects from both of the parent stocks.

### V. *The Family*

36. This, however, is a question into which I need not enter further. But one remark has still to be made which is of vital importance towards giving a clear statement of the case. I have spoken of the State, the Church, and industrial bodies as presenting different kinds of social organs. They are, in fact, the most conspicuous cases, and of the highest importance in any theory of society. But there is another form of association, namely, the family, which is frequently mentioned as though it were another co-ordinate group. This mode of speech, though it may be admissible for some purposes, seems to me to lead to much confusion ; and until we have recognised the essential differences, I do not think that we can have a clear conception of the bearings of our theory.

37. The distinctions, indeed, between the family and other forms of associations are too obvious to be neglected; for, in the first place, we have here to do with a simple and primitive instinct which is presupposed in all associations, instead of being in any sense a product of them. The sexual and parental passions are not only present at every stage of human society, but their germs at least must be present in the lower animals. The sentiment of loyalty to a state is clearly a derivative sentiment; it is the product of many instincts or modes of feeling, each of which has its own laws, independently of this special application. It is not a separate instinct with a definite object. The family, on the contrary, depends at once upon the most primitive instincts of our nature, which are the direct products of our organic constitution. The love of man and woman or of mother and child constitutes a bond which requires and admits of no further explanation by reference to other emotions. It is, of course, true that other instincts, and indeed every instinct of which we are capable, come to group themselves round this central instinct and strengthen the primitive tie. But that tie is more or less the ground of every other, an antecedent assumption in all human society, and therefore not explicable as a product of other modes of association. Again, not only the association but its form is determined within narrow limits by the organic structure of the individual. The State or the Church is an organism capable of indefinite growth; it may consist of any number of individuals, as its limits are not fixed by the nature of the units, but by various contingent circumstances. A man is not born a king or a subject, or in any other social group, but the parts are indefinitely interchangeable—a statement which is obviously not predicable of husbands and wives, mothers and children. Hence although the form of the family group has varied in such important respects, it is relatively constant. The same form of family association has continued through many ages, and extends through many different races. And from one point of view this implies the important distinction that whereas a given state of the social tissue is compatible with a vast variety of forms of government, with large or small

associations, with despotic, aristocratic, or democratic systems, a change in the family associations implies a corresponding change of vast importance in the very intimate structure of society, or, in other words, in the social tissue itself. The change, for example, from a society in which polyandry or the forcible capture of women was the rule to a state of monogamy and comparative sexual equality marks one of the greatest conceivable changes of social growth; and thus, from a scientific point of view at least, the family is not in any case the product of the political arrangement, but rather one of the primitive conditions which determine the nature of the state. A state may, of course, make a marriage law, and the society, acting through the political organ, may affect the nature of the family association. But though the law determines certain rules about the family tie which may be of great importance, it cannot create it or modify it beyond certain narrow limits. For, in the first place, the state being itself the product of individuals associated in families, its action will always be determined by the existing sentiment; and, secondly, the influence of any law must always be subordinate. Chastity and fidelity are not to be made by any law. No state can force men and women to marry, or really put down licentious habits, even if it makes the attempt; and, on the other hand, the marriage tie might be equally respected in fact even if there were no law in regard to it. The law, in fact, recognises one kind of association of the sexes, and bestows certain privileges upon those who are so associated, but it would be a hopeless inversion of consequent and antecedent to suppose that it can really originate it. It may be added, again, that we need not suppose any other form of association to be essential. It is quite possible to suppose men living together without any political association; and according to some theorists this is not only possible, but represents the ideal state of things. But some association between the sexes, however temporary and casual it might be, and some protection of infants by parents is absolutely necessary to the continuance of the race beyond a single generation—that is, some sort of family union must always exist. It need hardly be

added here, that, as a fact, the family represents that kind of association which is beyond all comparison the most vitally connected with the happiness of the individual, and the condition of which most immediately affects the gratification of all his strongest instincts. For a great part of every one's life the family is the whole world.

38. If, then, we look at society as a whole, we see that the division into families does not properly represent a mode of organisation co-ordinate with the other social organs. It represents, on the contrary, the immediate and primitive relation which holds men together. The family affections are the bonds which hold individuals together, and the primitive cohesions in virtue of which society becomes possible, the molecular forces which form the separate cells into a continuous tissue, the elementary property in virtue of which society is woven together, to be afterwards formed into different groups. The larger organs are relatively few, and their conformation depends partly upon the contingent circumstances in each case, and partly upon the mutual competition which leads to the survival of some and the blending together of others. They survive the individuals of which they are composed, as every organic group lives by the continuous elimination of some particles, and their replacement by others. Such statements are obviously quite inapplicable to families. They are multitudinous; and as they represent the primitive cohesion of the constituent particles, they represent a cross division running through all the other groups into which societies may be formed, and constantly disappear with the death of the member, though, as it breaks up, new families are incessantly formed; and the social competition affects the institution, not through the competition between rival families, but in so far as the fortunes of the whole group are constantly dependent upon its structure, which is determined in a very great degree by the nature of its family unions.

39. A brief recapitulation of the principal conclusions will now suggest the conclusion which is relevant to our inquiry. For I have tried to show, in the first place, that to determine the 'law' or 'form' of any instinct developed through the

social factor, it is necessary to go beyond the individual to the organism of which he is a member. A man acts from patriotic instinct; we may explain the force of this instinct in any given case partly by his innate qualities and partly by his circumstances. The latter consideration necessarily introduces the social factor: for the instinct has been elaborated by the evolution of the social organism, and its force and nature are determined by conditions not given when the innate character is given, and therefore not deducible from the individual organisation. So long, therefore, as we regard that organisation by itself, we must have an arbitrary datum, the 'law' of which is only ascertainable by introducing the wider considerations. Secondly, we have observed that we have to classify the various social instincts by reference to the complex structure of society, which implies a distribution into mutually dependent organs, each of which has its own conditions of persistence, and discharges a more or less definite function; and further, that any examination of such organs shows that their laws of growth and vitality are always relative to the underlying properties of the 'social tissue,' each representing a special modification of that tissue in view of some particular function, and varying in its structure according to various contingent circumstances. Again, whilst such organs may be adapted to a specific end, and may therefore be regarded simply as instruments for gratifying some independent instinct, and their existence is proportioned to their efficiency in securing the gratification, they always tend to become something more; they acquire a vitality independent of any special end, and become organs discharging a complex function, and imply the existence of a correspondingly complex set of instincts; whilst, finally, the social tissue is its own end, or depends upon the whole system of instincts possessed by man as a social and rational creature. And hence, thirdly, since the social tissue represents the general material or all-pervading substance from which the subordinate associations are constructed, we must consider the conditions of its vitality independently; and therefore we see that it is the primary unit upon which the process of evolution

impinges. The social evolution means the evolution of a strong social tissue; the best type is the type implied by the strongest tissue; and the correlation between painful and pernicious, pleasurable and beneficial, is to be understood by interpreting the pernicious and beneficial with reference to the tissue, whilst painful and pleasurable refer to the instincts generated in the socialised being. It is the vigorous tissue which prevails in the struggle, and fitness for forming such tissue is therefore the criterion of a successful elaboration of the type. This, it may be noted, applies equally to the qualities in respect of which society is an aggregate, and those in respect of which it is an organism; those which cannot vary without a corresponding variation of social structure, and those which vary so as to imply a change in the average faculties. For the process of evolution is simple, and each set of properties is always developed with reference to the other. This statement, however defective, will, I hope, have cleared the ground sufficiently to enable us to consider more fully what is implied as to the nature of those social instincts which gave rise to the moral law.

# CHAPTER IV

## FORM OF THE MORAL LAW

### I. *Law and Custom*

1. Society is an organic structure, dependent for its existence upon the maintenance of certain relations between its members, more complicated in proportion to the complexity of the whole. Its development implies, therefore, the development of customs in the race and habits in the individuals. There must be certain rules of conduct which are observed by all in order that corresponding rules may be observed by each. To trace the development of the society is at the same time to trace the development of the custom, and conversely to trace the custom is to trace the social development.

2. I use these words 'custom' and 'habit' without meaning to imply what perhaps is generally implied by those words, that the modes of conduct designated are variable or indefinite. We oppose a custom to a 'law of nature' because it is not unconditionally observed, and we oppose it to the positive law of a state because its observance is not enforced by the policeman. But the difference is not fundamental. A habit may often be regarded as a law of nature in the making. It passes into such a law by imperceptible degrees. We do not say that living men have a habit of breathing, because we hold it to be something more than a habit; it is, as we hold, a law of nature that living men should breathe. We hold, that is, that the group of phenomena denoted by human life inseparably and unconditionally includes the phenomena of breathing. We speak of habit only in cases where the continuance of the conduct depends in some degree upon the control of the will, and can be suspended in cases where it becomes painful

beyond a certain point. But the degree in which the co-operation of the will is a condition may vary indefinitely and become a vanishing quantity, as the habit becomes a definitely organised mode of conduct. If we could extend habit to cover any mode of conduct which can be brought under any general formula and is practised under assignable conditions, we might apply it both to conduct which must continue as life continues and to that which implies in addition to life a particular state of desire and aversion in the living being. The latter is essential not to all men, but to all men under given conditions, which may, of course, be rare, or may be all but universal. What is true of habits is of course also true of customs. I will only repeat that customs may be essential to a society which do not correspond to a habit essential to the individual. The existence of a given stage of social development is dependent upon certain customs which are not exemplified in every member of the society. The most civilised country includes numerous savages, who are in it but not of it, foreign matters contained in the organism, and such that it would fall to pieces were it not for their restraint by the more civilised members of the community.

3. Customs, again, have a relation to positive laws which has led to some perplexities. In primitive states of society the distinction is imperceptible. A tribe or clan is bound together by certain customs which are regarded by its members as ultimate and indefeasible. They are observed; but it has not yet been asked how they acquired nor why they should retain authority. In an early stage of reflection they are perhaps regarded as imposed by the authority of the gods, which really supposes the question may be asked, but implies that it cannot be answered. As they do not change, or change only by imperceptible degrees, there is no question as to the mode in which they can be changed, or, in other words, of the authority which imposes them. Historical inquirers, for example, find the traces of such a state in regard to the system of customs which regulate the possession of land. The mode in which the various members of a tribal community

are to cultivate its domains or to distribute the fruits of cultivation is settled by a system of rules which, in so far as they persist without reflection upon their utility and the possibility of changing them, have something of the character of animal instincts. They are analogous to the tacit agreement by which different herds of gregarious animals may divide a district between them. There is a continuous progress from this social condition to one in which the land laws form an elaborate code or an intricate mass of regulations, the provisions of which are expounded by judges and altered from time to time by the legislature. Now, however great may be the difference between the two stages of development, we have at every stage a social organisation dependent upon custom. The custom, indeed, has gained a new order of complexity. For, in the first place, the law actually obeyed is not a simple set of rules understood and spontaneously accepted by every one concerned. It contains what we may call a potential element. For there are a vast number of regulations which are only brought into play upon rare contingencies and which are known only to a few specialists. It would be straining words improperly to speak of a custom which is absolutely unknown to ninety-nine in a hundred of the persons concerned, and which perhaps does not determine conduct once in a generation. The custom which is essential at all times is that which directly governs conduct from day to day, and which is implied in the mutual confidence of proprietors and respect for the known rights of property, and, moreover, that of obedience to certain constituted authorities when called upon to settle disputes. I can hardly be said to be in the habit of observing certain rules, the very existence of which never enters my head, but I may be in the habit of accepting the decisions of certain persons who, on occasion, tell me what are those rules. This, it may be observed, is a general principle already noticed. As knowledge becomes too elaborate for any single head, we acquire a kind of potential knowledge. We do not know the rule, but we know where it is to be found. We are not guided simply by our instinct of locality, but by our confidence in the Nautical Almanac. A judge has

the same use in the social organism as a general word in language. We accept the general rule that we are to fulfil contracts. In most cases this may be sufficient, but to mark out the rule in a complex case we have to accept the results obtained by persons specially qualified. Thus a custom may regulate conduct in cases where it does not imply a corresponding instinct in the mind of the agent, because there is this elaboration of the potential element, which he can call into play by appealing to the authorities.

4. The authority, however, must itself rest upon custom, which, again, is far more elaborate than in the primitive state. For the chief or elders of the primitive tribe we have the whole complex organisation of a modern state. The custom of obedience, again, carries with it much more than is actually present to the mind of the average citizen. He obeys the king, the judge, and the policeman, and has probably a very vague conception of the precise relations between their various privileges and the relations of their offices and functions. There must, however, be a certain custom of obedience to constituted authorities, without which the whole state would be a rope of sand. And in this sense the law is not something more than custom, but simply a particular case of custom. A law, as jurists tell us, is the command of a sovereign enforced by a sanction; and the essence of law, therefore, depends upon the ultimate appeal to coercion, or, in other words, upon the circumstance that, if you do not obey the law, you may be made to obey it. A custom, on the other hand, depends always upon voluntary obedience, and exists only so long as people choose to comply with it. Now, for purposes of jurisprudence, the distinction may be important, but it is not ultimate from the scientific point of view. It explains only one collateral result from the general system. The lawyer takes for granted the constitution of the state; he is satisfied that a rule is a law when certain legislative processes have taken place, and he is content with the conclusion that ultimately the judge can appeal to the hangman. He does not go further, nor ask how the state holds together, nor in virtue of what principle the judge can depend upon the hangman's

fulfilment of his duty. When we ask that question—as we are bound to do for scientific purposes—we see at once that this possibility of physical coercion cannot give an ultimate answer. How is coercion possible? What will happen if the hangman does not obey the judge? We may go for our answer to the nursery rhyme about the old lady who could not drive her pig to market. When the butcher would not kill the pig and the rope would not hang the butcher, she had to appeal to the fire to burn the rope, and so forth. She depended upon coercion at some point because she had to deal with a pig, but to get the coercion she had to find some agency set in motion without coercion. Now in the case of the state, it not only may happen, but it is undoubtedly true in all cases, that coercion must be at hand, so to speak, to maintain order in case of necessity; and by coercion I mean the application of physical force, or the reduction of a man to a mere thing, so that his condition is determined by forces entirely independent of his own volitions. In that case the theory of the state is the theory of the man whose actions determine the action of his neighbours. The hangman and the jailer are doubtless necessaries so long as men are what they are, and savages form a part of a civilised community. But it is equally true that other forces are essential to anything like a civilised society. A temporary association may be formed where one man treats another simply as if he were a tool, or rules him by the threat of so treating him. And, again, a race may be ruled from without by oppressors who appeal only to motives of this class. But this fact does not prove that physical force, or the dread of its application, is in any special sense essential to political society. For every society, beginning from the simplest germ of social union, where the state is not yet differentiated from the family, requires the action of all the social instincts. The more elaborate the structure, the greater the number and force of the instincts which must be called into play. All that is implied in loyalty, patriotism, respect for order, mutual confidence between man and man, is essential to the vitality of a complex social organisation. A bond which rested solely upon fear would give, not an organic compound,

but a temporary association, ready to collapse at every instant. Coercion itself is only possible by virtue of the co-operation which implies the existence of every other social motive. We may say of any stone in an arch that it is the keystone, if by abstracting it the arch would fall into ruin, and coercion is in that sense a keystone in the social structure; but so are all the other forces which are essential to the structure so soon as it attains any permanence or magnitude. A power of flogging may be essential to the discipline of an army, but an army held together solely by dread of the whip would be comprised within a circle defined by the smart of the lash. It is so little essential, indeed, that a state of society is conceivable in which its actual application should disappear altogether. Men might be willing to obey their rulers simply from respect and affection; judges might be arbitrators whose decisions would always be accepted by mutual consent. The power of applying coercion in case of need must no doubt increase as the strength of the social bond increases; but that bond is also the stronger in proportion as the need of applying it becomes less.

5. The whole social structure, then, must rest in the last resort upon the existence of certain organic customs, which cannot be explained from without. They depend for their force and vitality upon the instincts of the individual as modified by the social factor; and it would be a fallacy to single out any one of these instincts as the essential one when the co-operation of all is necessarily implied. From this point of view, therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between the organic instincts of a state and the corresponding customs on the one hand, and the derivative and secondary instincts which are the product of that state on the other hand; otherwise we fall into the absurdity, not rare in political speculations, of implicitly assuming that a state can somehow make itself. A legal sanction may of course be added to any custom whatever, and thus it may seem that a state can make its own constitution and define its own organic laws. In reality, however, the power of making a constitution presupposes a readiness to act together and accept certain rules as binding, and thus again implies a whole set of established customs, such as are neces-

sary to the constitution and authority of a representative body. Lawyers are apt to speak as though the legislature were omnipotent, as they do not require to go beyond its decisions. It is, of course, omnipotent in the sense that it can make whatever laws it pleases, inasmuch as a law means any rule which has been made by the legislature. But from the scientific point of view the power of the legislature is, of course, strictly limited. It is limited, so to speak, both from within and from without; from within, because the legislature is the product of a certain social condition, and determined by whatever determines the society; and from without, because the power of imposing laws is dependent upon the instinct of subordination, which is itself limited. If a legislature decided that all blue-eyed babies should be murdered, the preservation of blue-eyed babies would be illegal; but legislators must go mad before they could pass such a law, and subjects be idiotic before they could submit to it.

6. Considering, therefore, any society as a natural growth, or, in other words, regarding it from the scientific point of view, we see what is implied in a law. We assume that certain organic instincts have been formed, corresponding, in my language, to a given state of the social tissue; and involving a certain body of customs essential to the life of the society, and giving rise to a special organisation according to the various internal circumstances. We may, then, trace the manifestations of the social properties in two ways—either as implying a certain social structure, or as implying a certain type of character in the members of the society. There is, on the one hand, a political organisation which acts in certain definable ways, and, for example, has an apparatus for hanging convicted murderers. The 'law' may be regarded either as a statement of the relations existing between the various parts of the political organism, or may be viewed as a command and a threat, implying a notice to murderers that they will be hanged if caught. The same facts, regarded from the other side, necessarily imply the existence of an internal law. The individual must acquire certain instincts in virtue of which he respects the authorities and dislikes murderers. He must

acquire them, that is, in order to be an efficient part of the social organisation; and the law may be expressed as threatening him with whatever consequences—other than the legal consequences—result from imperfect harmony with his social medium. The society exists by virtue of the vitality of these instincts. Both kinds of law are expressions of the same general fact; the essence of the former being that the individual is subject to a pressure tending to enforce a correspondence between his actions or feelings and those of his neighbours. Some such process must take place in every association, from a state to a gang of thieves, whatever the method by which conformity is produced; and wherever it is produced we may speak of a social law. It may not be possible to consider the two modes of action separately. Every law of conduct more or less affects the character of the persons subject to it, so long as it is enforced; and necessarily every variation in the character more or less affects the sentiments from which the external law derives its force. The correspondence, however, is not so intimate that one mode of statement can always be rendered into the other. For, as I have said, laws, and indeed elaborate codes of law, are developed which scarcely affect the general character of the underlying customs, and which represent latent modifications of the social structure not implying any sensible modification of the instinct of order. And in the same way the instincts may vary widely without producing any normal change in the external order, though they may in some degree affect the mode in which it works. The change may be too fine to be expressed in terms of external relation.

7. If, then, the essence of any law is in the mutual pressure of the different parts of the social structure, by whatever means it is carried out, and to whatever process it owes its vitality, we have still to consider how the various codes of law must be classified from our point of view. To every kind of association, even the most ephemeral, there corresponds, as I have said, some kind of custom, and therefore of law. And what has been said in the last chapter will give a sufficient clue to the right mode of regarding these various associations and

the external processes. If, in fact, we take any association with a given end or function, its structure and the laws of conduct and character imposed upon its members will be determined by reference to that end and to the society of which it forms a part. An army, for example, may be called the fighting organ of a given nation. It resembles a machine constructed from given materials for a given end. From such data we could determine its structure, the discipline necessary to its existence, and thus the various regulations by which the external relations of the whole are defined, and the corresponding instincts in the units. The statement showing how men could be compounded into a fighting machine would show also how they could be most efficiently combined for a particular kind of fighting or from a particular kind of social organisation; and the question of how far any particular army fulfilled these conditions would be determined by the specific conditions of time and place. When we pass from the organ to the 'tissue,' the problem changes. We still have an organic structure with certain rules of conduct and corresponding instincts, but we have no longer a definite end nor a fixed material. The material, that is, is to be regarded as developing and determining the development of the subsidiary organs. The organ is intelligible by its relation to the organism, and the end or the function is assigned by that relation; but the organism itself is at once means and end; every part depends upon every other part, and the end is intelligible only as the sum of all the correlated instincts. The statement, therefore, becomes different. We now have to remember that the organism develops without any change (or any corresponding change) in the constituent units. It develops properties, therefore, which are not essential to the individual, for he can exist in a ruder state without them; and which, therefore, imply the growth of a social law—that is, of qualities developed in him through the social pressure. And further, we see that some of these properties are essential to the society. Its growth is a process of developing such properties; and, as we have seen that the most efficient society is that which normally survives, we may inversely infer from the survival of a society that it

has developed the properties upon which its efficiency depends. For the end, as before understood, we have now to consider the society as capable of maintaining itself in the general equilibrium, whether by competition with weaker societies, or as supporting itself by its direct action upon the external world, and as capable of doing so by virtue of the social properties which have been developed. We may regard them, therefore, either as the conditions of the social vitality, or as imposing a certain law upon its individual members. In order that the society may exist or develop it must have certain qualities and customs, and must in some way impress the corresponding instincts and habits upon its members. Hence we have to find the qualities which are essential to the society at a given stage of development, though not essential to the individual, and we may then state them either as conditions of the vitality of the social tissue, or as constituting the law imposed upon the individual as a member of society, that is, as a constituent part of that tissue. The actual law, again, may not represent the greatest degree of efficiency possible for a certain stage of social growth; for, as we have observed, the qualities may vary within certain limits consistently with the persistence of the society, but they must be an approximate statement of the essential conditions.

## II. *The Moral Law*

8. Hence, without further elaboration, we may approach to a definition of the moral law. This much at least is obvious: the morality of a society or of an individual implies at least a certain modification of the most important relations and instincts. We may say of any suggested regulation that it is too trifling to have any moral significance; we cannot possibly say that it is too important. Morality, it may be, is not interested in a mere question of manners and fashions; but rules which affect the very existence of a society or a human being do not, by that circumstance, lie beyond the sphere of morality. Another principle closely connected with this is equally undeniable. The moral law is understood as

applying to all men, in so far as they have reached a certain stage of development, not in so far as they belong to any particular class of society. The same moral law is applicable to all adult men and women, whether they are rich or poor, in one or other profession, or, briefly, belonging to any category compatible with a full development of their faculties. Of course, each man has special duties corresponding to his particular position in life, and in some positions there is a greater demand for certain kinds of morality than in others. But this means simply that the same general principle is applicable in an indefinite variety of relations. The moral law is always capable of being stated in the form, 'All men must do so and so,' not all lawyers, or soldiers, or sailors must do. You come within its operation in so far as you have the fundamental qualities common to all members of the society, not in so far as you have this or that particular contingent quality. This, then, is to say that morality defines some of the most important qualities of the social tissue. It does not apply to those qualities which are essential to the life of the individual, for immoral people clearly exist, and the law, in this sense, implies the possibility of disobedience. On the other hand, it does not apply to the more special and superficial qualities which fit a man for this or that position without affecting his fitness to be a member of society in some position; and therefore we may assume, from our previous statement, that the moral law is under one aspect a statement of the conditions, or of part of the conditions, essential to the vitality of the social tissue. It may be more than this in various ways; but it must be this, whatever else it is. The process by which society has been developed implies that the most important characteristics developed in the individual by the social pressure correspond to the conditions of existence of the society. The moral law defines some of the most important characteristics so developed, and is, therefore, a statement of part of the qualities in virtue of which the society is possible. It is not an exhaustive statement, for other qualities may be essential; nor an absolutely accurate statement, for societies exist in which the morality varies within wide limits. But so

far as it goes it must be an approximate statement of part of the conditions.

9. In saying this, I do not mean either to assert or deny that this gives the form in which the moral law presents itself to the members of the society in which it inheres. I am considering the cause, not the reason, of our moral sentiments. Our moral judgment must condemn instincts and modes of conduct which are pernicious to the social vitality, and must approve the opposite; but it does not necessarily follow that it must condemn or approve them because they are perceived to be pernicious or beneficial. The question indeed remains, how it comes to pass that we condemn what is pernicious if we do not think it to be pernicious; and this cannot be fully answered at the present stage of the argument. Here I will only observe, that there is no absurdity in supposing that the cause of our likes and dislikes may in some sense be the fact that they are useful to us, although we may not be conscious of their utility. This, indeed, must be to some extent the case with all beings below the reasoning stage.

### III. *The Moral Law as Natural*

10. The same principle accounts for the qualities most obviously connoted by the term 'moral.' The moral law is often distinguished from other groups of law on the ground that it is divine, not human, natural, not artificial, or that it grows instead of being made. The distinction is not an ultimate one. Art to the scientific observer is, as Shakespeare says, a part of nature; everything springs, mediately or immediately, from the divine power as here understood, and all human development is a kind of growth. The distinction is only relevant at a lower stage of analysis. We mean by it this much at least, that whereas the law of the land is determined by the will of the legislature, the moral law is as independent of the legislature as the movements of the planets. King, lords, and commons, by going through certain forms, may determine whether theft or lying shall be criminal; they cannot in any degree decide whether it shall or shall not be

wicked. This seems to be in one sense equally evident in all conceivable moral systems. If, with one set of thinkers, you resolve morality into reason, a law to alter morality would be as absurd as a law to repeal a proposition in Euclid: if you adopt the utilitarian theory, such a law would be as absurd as a law to alter the pleasure derivable from the consumption of stimulants. Upon the doctrine here advocated, it would be as absurd, let us say, as a law to make intoxication healthy. The action of any set of people can no more change the nature of facts than of logical necessities.

11. But this does not entirely meet the case; for I am here dealing with morality as it actually exists, not with morality as it ought to be. So far as morality either is or necessarily implies a statement of certain facts, it is of course true that morality cannot be made; but actual morality corresponds to men's theories about facts, and varies in proportion as they are fallible. It may therefore deviate from that which would be the code if they were incapable of error, and we may ask how it is possible to define the possible amplitude of their oscillations. May not the code of rules by which our moral judgments are guided vary as widely as any other code of rules? May it not be swayed by prejudices or altered by respect for some constituted authority? Though a legislative enactment could not make murder right, might it not as a fact determine the sentiment about murder? This is necessarily a question of fact to be settled by historical inquiry, but the principles laid down may suggest some limit to the possible oscillations.

12. It is plain, in fact, that though morality varies, it must vary within incomparably narrower limits than other systems of law, because its variation is determined by far more general conditions. It is the variation of the most intimate structure and the deepest instincts, not of the superficial sentiments or of the special modifications of society. In the earliest stages of growth, when certain rigid customs represent the germs both of moral and other codes, the custom develops in all cases by a slow growth rather than by constant modification; and even in the most civilised periods a similar process may

take place in regard to certain rules as modified imperceptibly by judicial interpretation. But as the difference becomes more palpable, the moral law alone retains the characteristics of divine, indefeasible, and so forth. The difference then appears between the organic laws of the tissue and the special laws of any particular organisation. One class of laws maintains itself by the direct action of the organic instincts; others by the application of these instincts to special circumstances, or by respect for the authority which developed by such application. In a given case the two kinds of motive may be inextricably blended. I may obey a given law either because of the authority which enforces it or on its own account. I may keep a promise because I think it right, or because I am afraid of the penalties imposed upon a breach of contract, and in the latter case I keep it for the same reasons which would induce me to wear a prescribed costume. But the instincts which induce me to act morally are co-ordinate with those which induce me to obey authority, and can only be altered by a radical alteration of my whole character. The others are derivative, and may therefore vary as the particular action of the authority varies. And thus we may assume that the organic variations belong to an entirely different order, and are relatively strong compared with those of the secondary or derivative instincts.

13. This applies to the case in which we may regard even a moral law as being in some degree made by a process not unlike that of actual legislation. Such a case is, in fact, more or less illustrated by every great moral teacher. If the Gospels revealed a new system of morality, their promulgation may be regarded as a case of moral legislation. It would be admitted, indeed, by every believer, that for such a case nothing less is needed than a divine interposition; the direct intervention of a power which can modify the organic as easily as the secondary instincts. But the question, so far as it comes within the sphere of scientific inquiry, is simply one of facts—how far, namely, the promulgation of a new moral principle can alter the accepted moral code? If we could conceive of the moral change wrought by Christianity as a

case of obedience to a power revealed by miracles, the immediate change would not be so much a change of morality as a change in the sanctions of morality. It would be revealed to men that certain kinds of conduct had consequences of which they were not previously aware. Such a change might, no doubt, affect indirectly their whole moral character. But it is needless to discuss such a theory, except to take note of the virtual assertion that nothing short of supernatural interference could bring about such a result. So long as we remain within the limits of scientific inquiry, we must admit that the influence of the greatest moral teacher depends, not upon his authority, but upon the congeniality of his teaching to the sentiments by which the social medium is already permeated. He succeeds in so far as his teaching is in harmony with the prevailing instincts. He could not teach if he were not in advance of his fellows, nor find a hearing unless he were giving articulate shape to thoughts obscurely present to countless multitudes. Like Socrates, he must be something of a 'midwife'; he facilitates the birth of the new ideas with which the world is already in travail, and is really the interpreter and the mouthpiece of thought seeking for utterance, and representing a slow process of elaboration. The poet and the philosopher, and the religious teacher no less than these, depend for their power upon this unconscious co-operation; and the more men study the history of the world, the more importance they come to attach to this occult process of dumb preparation.

14. When we say, then, that morality grows and is not made, we really point to this fact, that it is the fruit of a gradual evolution of the organic instinct continued through many generations. Each individual imbibes the moral sentiments as he grows up and regards them as primitive because he has accepted them without conscious reflection. To alter the code thus elaborated is to alter the most deeply rooted modes of thought and feeling, which are embedded in the whole scheme of life, and accepted by the race as its theory of the external world. The reformer must start with these sentiments ingrained in his character, and must sympathise with

his fellows before he can influence them. New discoveries about the external world, new wants due to the growth of society, the gradual accumulation of natural and intellectual wealth, may necessitate some modification of the organic instincts, but such changes must always be slow, and involve many blind gropings after a solution before any tolerable equilibrium can be reached. At each particular stage of the process, the ordinary mind resists any change in the principles instilled into it from birth, and is only induced to revolt by some very sensible evil. To alter a speculative opinion is hard enough when its alteration involves any deeply seated change in our system of thought, but it is far harder to alter the opinions which have a direct bearing upon our conduct, and still more to modify profound prejudices in the sluggish minds of the great mass of mankind; and therefore even in the case where the supposed change involves a real improvement in the social adjustment, and has all the advantages, direct and indirect, resulting from that fact, it implies modifications so far-reaching in their character, and requiring the tacit co-operation of so many minds, that it must resemble one of the slow natural processes rather than the sudden change which may be wrought by a single discovery in a particular department of thought, or the change produced in comparatively superficial arrangement by a legislative action.

15. From this observation, too familiar to require further exposition, we may pass to the cognate attribute of the moral law, its eternity and immutability. From our point of view, these phrases must be understood in a sense compatible with the admission of evolution. The actual moral law develops, and therefore changes, whatever may be said of the ideal law. We must regard the moral instincts as dependent upon human nature or human society, and therefore liable to vary in so far as their subject is liable to vary. When the older school of metaphysicians speak of the immutability of the law, they may either mean that the law will always be the same under the same conditions, which is no doubt true, but gives us no real information; or that it would be in some sense the same even if the conditions of human life were radically altered,

which is either false or refers to a transcendental region of real existences altogether separate from the phenomenal world, and therefore has no intelligible bearing upon scientific theories. We cannot mean by eternity or immutability that the moral law will remain unaltered even if the conditions upon which it depends be altered; but only that these are the most fundamental conditions assignable, the permanent conditions of social vitality, which remain constant through an indefinite series of more superficial changes in the social organisation. If we assume that these conditions may be entirely different in some different world, the morality in that world would presumably be also different. If in some distant planet lying were as essential to human welfare as truthfulness is in this world, falsehood might there be a cardinal virtue. The possibility of such a state of things may be denied by those, at least, who profess omniscience; but if you admit the possibility of such a change, you must admit also the possibility of the correlative change in the morality. The morality then is as permanent as the conditions of existence, though there may be a dispute as to the permanence of those conditions. A being radically different from man would no doubt have a different code of behaviour. The degree of constancy which we attribute to the moral code will appear more plainly when we come to a more direct deduction of the specific virtues. At present, we may say that any change must be relatively small in proportion to the permanence of the deepest organic instincts as compared with their modification under particular conditions. But we may also go one step further. The variation, we may say, whatever it is, must correspond to a process of evolution, not to what could be called arbitrary modification. If one form of living being is evolved from another, there must be a certain community of plan. Though the two may differ, certain fundamental properties are exemplified in both. Similarly, when a code of law is developed from a simpler code, the latter, though richer in content and more varied in application, must contain certain first principles already given in the first, and extend them by generalising instead of repealing them. There is a continuity though not

an identity of sentiment. The type of character which is approved at one stage must be always on the line towards the type approved at a more advanced stage. And therefore, although we may raise our standard, and consider the good man of one period as an average, or less than an average man in a higher period, we may always so far approve of the standard which we have left behind as to consider that its relative judgments were always correct. The qualities approved may have been in everything better than the qualities disapproved, though the highest qualities conceivable were not equal to those now demanded. But a clearer view of the principle follows from another characteristic of morality, which appears from a historical point of view to be of primary importance.

### IV. *Morality as Internal*

16. The clear enunciation of one principle seems to be a characteristic of all the great moral revolutions. The recognition amounts almost to a discovery, and would seem to mark the point at which the moral code first becomes distinctly separated from other codes. It may be briefly expressed in the phrase that morality is internal. The moral law, we may say, has to be expressed in the form, 'be this,' not in the form, 'do this.' The possibility of expressing any rule in this form may be regarded as deciding whether it can or cannot have a distinctively moral character. Christianity gave prominence to the doctrine that the true moral law says 'hate not,' instead of 'kill not.' The men of old time had forbidden adultery; the new moral legislator forbade lust; and his greatness as a moral teacher was manifested in nothing more than in the clearness with which he gave utterance to this doctrine. It would be easy to show how profoundly the same doctrine, in various forms, has been bound up with other moral and religious reformations in many ages of the world.

17. What, then, is implied in the change? Conduct may be regarded as a function of character and circumstance. An adjustment of internal to external relations is, it is said, the very definition of life. It follows, hence, that every law as to

conduct carries with it a rule as to character, and *vice versâ*. Regulate a man's feelings or his actions, and you necessarily affect his actions or his feelings. Induce a man not to hate his brother, and he will be slow to kill him; and if you persuade him not to kill, you necessarily limit to some degree the force of his hatred. As it is easier for the primitive mind to accept the objective than the subjective definition of conduct, the primitive rule takes the corresponding form, and only prescribes qualities of character indirectly by prescribing methods of conduct.

18. Where, then, is the importance of making the distinction? If to every mode of feeling there corresponded a definite mode of conduct, the two rules would imply each other. It is possible to suggest certain cases in which this would be approximately true. It seems, at least, to hold true of the appetites as distinguished from the intellectual emotions; for while every appetite has a definite physical organ to correspond to it, the mode of feeling and the mode of acting are mutually implied. To regulate thirst is to regulate drinking; but this fails to hold good so soon as we deal with the emotions which do not discharge themselves by a fixed or narrow channel. If I try to define any mode of action solely by its objective characteristics, that is, solely by those qualities through the perception of which I recognise the existence of a world external to myself, I find that the coincidence cannot be maintained. Any action so defined may be due to the most varying motives, and the same motive prompt the most various actions. Killing generally implies hatred, but in certain cases I may kill from a sense of duty, from a desire of money, or even from love of the person killed; when I wish, for example, to 'put him out of his misery.' Therefore, though the prohibition of killing generally forbids the same acts as are forbidden by a prohibition of hatred, the two prohibitions will diverge in an indefinite number of cases. If I wish to forbid all the actions which spring out of hatred, the definition by the internal characteristic is simple and exhaustive, whereas the other kind of definition must be indefinitely complex, and must always be more or less defective.

I may modify the prohibition of killing by permitting it in particular cases, as, for example, in war; and again by adding a number of subsidiary prohibitions, forbidding other means of gratifying hatred, such as mere insult or the production of conditions indirectly unfavourable to life. But, after all, it would of course be idle to attempt to sum up all the indefinite variety of ways by which one man can inflict pain upon his neighbours. The difference between the two methods is like the difference between marking a circle by the revolution of a fixed line round a given centre and trying to make an approximate circle by causing a number of other figures drawn from external points to intersect in such a way as more or less to indicate the circumference of the circle. If, in short, I wish to forbid all conduct which is the fruit of a certain disposition, I shall do so at once by forbidding that disposition; and, in that case, the rule of conduct will tend to become simpler as I bring new classes of action under this general rule. If, on the other hand, I proceed by the opposite method, and try to give the external characteristics of the same conduct, my rule will become constantly more complex as I endeavour to make it applicable to the indefinite variety of possible cases.

19. Now every conceivable rule of conduct must be a rule of character. Since action is (upon my assumption) always determined by pain or pleasure, a uniform rule implies uniform feeling in regard to the conduct prescribed. Rules of action imply a classification of things in general according to their relation to the feelings of the agent, and thus the formation of primary rules corresponding to his primitive sensibilities, and harmonised by the unity of the organisation constituted by those sensibilities. These primary rules must be capable of statement as rules of character, and for this reason, as we have just seen, cannot be adequately stated as rules of external conduct; for a man, considered as an agent, must be regarded as simply an organised group of feelings. The calculus of motive cannot include any other data besides the feelings. The universe only comes into consideration in fixing certain internal conditions of feeling, whilst the character is the expression of the internal conditions. Now, in any given case,

the conduct will of course depend upon the special stimulus which comes from without as well as upon the character. To know how the character acts, we must know what influences are operative; we must understand the instrument, and we must also know what are the movements of the external player. But to obtain the general rule we abstract from all those particular accidents, and consider only what is essential. We want to know what are the conditions imposed by the structure of the instrument itself, whatever conditions may be imposed from without. But this is to take into account only those external circumstances which are constant, and whose existence is assumed when we assume the existence of the agent. The organism implies the environment as a persistent and universal condition, to which therefore no explicit reference need be made. If breathing is necessary to life, air must be necessary; but I can define the laws of breathing, its relation to other functions, and its place in the whole organic equilibrium, without making any further reference to this implied condition. So a psychologist might regard a man as a compound of certain primitive emotions, and give their relations as constituting his character without any reference to the external conditions which are necessary to the existence of such a being. The general rules so given would be implied in every particular action and their mode of operation, and each case would depend upon the special stimulus applied; but the rules would not themselves include any datum of external fact. In the special cases where a given mode of feeling has a fixed external correlative, the two modes of stating the rule would be interchangeable; but as in the general case no such equivalent presents itself, we must necessarily state the rule in the direct and only possible form, namely, as a rule of character. And since morality is, as we have said, concerned with these general rules, the only mode of stating the moral law must be as a rule of character.

20. The point may be made clearer by taking into account another consideration. If we consider any given class of actions, we may say that the intrinsic motive, instinct, or mode of feeling is that which being given, the action follows,

or which, if the action takes place, must be present. Hunger, we may say (without taking note of possible exceptions), implies eating under certain circumstances, and *vice versâ* the consumption of food under these circumstances implies hunger. And, again, there will be a true intrinsic motive if certain conditions always produce a given desire, even when other conditions may prevent the desire from leading to action. That is the case if hunger is always produced by certain conditions, although other considerations, *e.g.* the fear of poison, may prevent eating. For a volition we then have only a velleity. There is, on the other hand, an extrinsic motive when the conduct is desired solely with a view to some further result, which may or may not be present, and is therefore not desired when that result is not anticipated. In such a case the motive is not only overcome, but entirely suppressed by a change of circumstances, and the apparent end turns out to have been only desirable as a means to some further end.

21. Assuming this, we may say that there are many classes of conduct to which there is no possible intrinsic motive. This is true of all classes of conduct which can be defined in purely objective terms; for I must understand by such terms, terms which have no direct significance for the feelings whatever, or, in other words, which refer solely to the mathematical relations of the object. I have no intrinsic motive for going east rather than west, up rather than down, or round two sides of a triangle rather than along the third. The physiologist considers all phenomena from this point of view and classifies them entirely by reference to changes in time and place. But when we are speaking of conduct, it is plain that the rules so obtained are only interesting in so far as they can be used by our feelings. They enable us to calculate what will be the consequences of conduct, and reveal their whole significance when we apply them to calculate such consequences. The knowledge that one side of a triangle is less than the two others has no interest in itself, but as soon as I am in a hurry to reach a given point, or wish to avoid reaching it too soon, it of course determines the mode in which my feelings will prompt my conduct.

22. In the general case, however, the statement will be different. A given class of actions will be pleasant or painful, and may therefore suggest a rule of conduct of one kind or other. Now, generally speaking, we may say of a certain class of conduct partly defined by external considerations, that it must correspond more or less closely to some intrinsic motive. It may be such that one kind of conduct alone will be desirable on the assumption that the agent is accessible to certain motives. That is, if we have a certain character, we shall act in the way supposed. But it will also generally be true that the same conduct may be prompted by other motives; so that we cannot certainly infer the motive from the conduct. And besides this, it will generally be true that the desirability of the conduct depends to some extent upon circumstances not expressed in the rule. So that some kinds of conduct, although falling within the class definition, do not present themselves as desirable. That is to say, it has no intrinsic motive precisely corresponding to it. So, to repeat the former illustration, certain actions are generally the result of kindness. So long as I am kindly I shall not kill; but the abstinence from killing may be the result of many other motives, such as fear of the gallows; and in some rare cases kindliness might even prompt to killing. To say this is only to repeat the previous statement of the impossibility of making the external and internal codes precisely coincident.

23. We may ask, then, how any external rule of conduct is possible; for if all conduct is conditioned by feeling, and uniform conduct implies uniform feeling, whilst external uniformity could only be secured in practice by internal variation, and *vice versâ*, it would seem that no external rule can express a real rule of conduct. In one sense this seems to be rigidly true. That is, there is no rule which a human being will obey under all circumstances in spite of all conceivable conflicting motives. This is simply an admission that the strength of the will is finite. It merely asserts that other motives may override those implied in the observance of the rule; the rule may still be an operative force, though not the sole or dominant force. But the question is how any rule

of the external kind can express even a uniform desire, and if not, whence it can derive any permanent influence? To this we may say, that, in the first place, the observance of such a rule may become a habit. The essence of a habit is, as we have seen, that I act in a certain way in obedience to certain signals, without calling up all the feelings implied. If I am in the habit of getting up to breakfast when a bell rings, I may get up when a bell rings which I know to be the indication; but I must suppose that in this case the knowledge is more or less of the potential kind; that is, that I might know if I reflected or brought into vivid consciousness all the thoughts connected with the given symbol. And, in the second place, the observance, and still more frequently the breach of a rule, may be due simply to the fact that I am an unreasonable and inconsistent being. This means virtually, as we have already seen, that I may have a different character at different times, and perhaps allow a set of feelings which, on other occasions, are relatively superficial, to overpower feelings which are at other times the most powerful. I have, however, spoken sufficiently of this, which in fact is part of the general problem as to the reasonableness of action. So far as I become reasonable this kind of irregularity will disappear, and I shall be governed in the same cases by the same motives, and cease to apply rules in cases where they are not applicable.

24. Let us suppose, then, that I act reasonably in the sense that, as I always judge by the same principles or am actuated by the same set of feelings brought into harmony and subordination, and therefore that a uniform rule does in fact correspond to a uniform mode of feeling, then I may accept the rule as affording a sufficient presumption under ordinary circumstances. It serves as an indication that the facts are such as would determine me to act in a given way. So, for example, my objection to killing may be founded upon a dislike to giving pain. That is the intrinsic motive of a class of actions which cannot be defined by any absolutely coincident, external, correlative. Still it gives me a strong presumption against killing, because in almost all cases killing

gives pain. If I see a man, therefore, and know nothing about him beyond the fact that he is a man, I shall refrain from killing him. I shall again refrain unless the presumption is rebutted by evidence that killing will diminish pain; and in that case, I shall kill if, in fact, the dislike to giving pain is the intrinsic and sole applicable motive of my conduct in relation to my neighbours. On this supposition the general rule is a conditional one, although the conditions may not be distinctly formulated.

25. Again, the rule may be accepted from an extrinsic motive; that is to say, from a motive not implied in the definition of the class of conduct commanded or prohibited. This, of course, is the case wherever the rule is accepted, not for itself, but from regard to the authority by which it is imposed. In this case I do not object to killing, but to some consequence not necessarily or invariably connected with it. I may object to kill because killing leads to the gallows or because it leads to damnation. Were I certain to escape the hangman and to obtain spiritual absolution, I might still be ready to kill. This, of course, is a highly important case in practice. The legislator is forced to classify conduct by its objective manifestations. He, therefore, is necessarily limited by the considerations already suggested. He cannot forbid all the possible manifestations of a passion such as hatred, but only those which produce certain tangible and visible consequences. However elaborate his code, there will still be innumerable devices by which a man whose character prompts him to take the forbidden courses can gratify his passions by indirect methods. And where the moralist and the religious teacher is misled by the analogy, and instead of forbidding the passion tries to classify all the modes of conduct to which it may lead, he gets into the same difficulty. He permits what he does not prohibit, and is therefore in danger of producing hypocrisy instead of virtue, and stopping a few holes in a sieve instead of stopping the stream at its source. And here we have the secret of the immense importance attributed by all the higher moralists to the other mode of statement.

26. Hence we may define the spheres to which rules, which

have or have not an external reference, are necessarily limited. So long as any external element is present in the formula, it must be a formula of the organ, not of the organism, applicable under particular conditions or circumstances, and not belonging to the man simply in respect of his intrinsic motives. For if the respect for the law is really a case of respect for the imposing authority, that authority is itself a product of the primary instincts acting under special conditions, and determined by them and by the properties of the 'tissue' of which it is a modification. Therefore a rule of conduct which tacitly or implicitly depends upon some principle of authority must by its nature define, not a property of the tissue, but of some special product, determined by external circumstances and variable from time to time. And if we take the case of any rule which does not coincide throughout as to the motive and the conduct, it can only give a conditional rule of conduct, the condition being not the general conditions implied in the existence of the agent, but in some special set of facts which may vary whilst those conditions are fixed. In either case, the rule virtually implies acting by some criterion according to which we classify the particular case before us. To have some such criterion is of course an essential in all conduct, since conduct of every kind involves some set of external events. Now, if the criterion shows that the case belongs to a class of events corresponding to a certain kind of feeling, there are always points at which it fails us. If through habit or inattention we continue to observe it, we act inconsistently; if we are fully conscious of what we are doing and are guided by uniform principles, we shall not observe it. Therefore the rule, properly stated, does not give a law of the character, but only of the character as affected by certain special and variable circumstances. If, again, the criterion marks the case as belonging to a class of actions forbidden by a certain authority, we do not ask whether the classification itself depends upon any intelligible principle or implies anything beyond a classification by external characteristics. We are consistent in obeying the law, whatever it prescribes, even though the classification assumed by the

law be from other points of view inconsistent. In this case, therefore, the true rule is in the form: Do as you are bid by somebody. And as here, again, the instinct of obedience to any authority whatever is necessarily dependent upon the particular circumstances under which the authority has grown up, and is a deduction from the primary instincts in a particular application, not the principle from which they can be deduced, we still have a rule of character as affected by special conditions, not a rule which corresponds to the organic relations of character. Hence any external law whatever fails to give a law of character simply; and, on the other hand, the organic law must also transcend all these special applications, however general some of them may be. The moral law as a law of social 'tissue,' or as a law concerned only with the development of character by the intrinsic properties of the social organism in presence of fixed external conditions, can only be adequately expressed in terms which have no external reference.

27. The process, then, by which the moral law (or rather the law of conduct of men considered simply as constituting the social tissue, for this law includes but is not coincident with the moral law) is developed, is a process of generalisation. It corresponds to a vast induction carried on by the race as organised in society. It is a gradual disengagement of certain primary instincts, and a distinct perception of their value and mutual relations from the perplexing complexity of their particular manifestations—a process which is more complex because it involves a modification of the emotions and of the whole character, as well as a simple intellectual process. Certain modes of conduct are seen to be bad, that is, they are disliked for some reason or other by the persons concerned. Society tries to put them down as it tries to extirpate dangerous animals. It develops in proportion to its success in this undertaking, which implies, again, a development of the feelings hostile to such practices, and at the same time of a social structure capable of applying effectual restraints. Now, so far as the growth of a certain body of sentiment is implied, the question emerges, What is the common principle in virtue

of which this, that, and the other bad practice is hateful? As men grow more reasonable, they are constantly comparing and correlating their feelings; some such process is involved in all conscious action; they are thus classifying the various external phenomena in respect of the feelings excited. Gradually, it appears that this process leads to a necessary divergence of the two methods of classification. The same feeling is excited in countless ways according to the endless combination of external facts. No definite class of external facts can be assigned which precisely corresponds to one intrinsic feeling. Hence, as the ultimate principle of classification must for all purposes of conduct be by the primary feelings, we find that the most general rules of conduct must be expressed in terms of character, and the other rules, which contain the application of those general rules to more special cases, must take a subordinate position, and be regarded as being only of conditional value. This, again, is the same thing as to say that these general rules express the properties of the social tissue, or those properties of the organic growth which underlie all the special arrangements which can only be regarded as comparatively superficial products of the tissue, determined by its necessary external relations. Finally, it may be repeated that they must necessarily correspond within narrow limits to a statement of the conditions of vitality of the tissue which they characterise.

28. This, again, gives an intelligible sense to another sense in which we may understand another predicate frequently attributed to the moral law. Moralists frequently assert its supremacy, and appear in so doing to fall into a vicious circle. A legislator orders me to lie, and the moral law orders me to tell the truth. Then, it is said, I ought to obey the moral law. But if 'ought' means it is right, and right means in conformity to the moral law, this appears to be equivalent to saying that I ought to do what I ought to do. It is difficult if not impossible to escape from this dilemma so long as we are speaking of a supremacy *de jure*; but if we speak of a supremacy *de facto*, the statement may bear a tenable interpretation. It is conceivable, in fact, that any law belonging

to a given association may be regarded as more or less conditional. I may agree to obey its rules so long as those rules do not conflict with the laws of a higher authority. We might conceivably have a state which in this way did in fact recognise the moral law, so that no law would actually be enforced when it conflicted with the moral sense of the community. How far this is the case in any really existing state I do not presume to say. It is undoubtedly very difficult to enforce laws when they palpably offend the recognised morality of a country; and the conceivable reply of a lawyer, that they are still laws, is a mere verbal reply when we are dealing with facts. But however this may be in particular cases, the general principle remains true. The laws of a state, along with all its other arrangements, are, generally speaking, the product of the social medium from which it springs, and generally, therefore, reflect the prevalent moral feeling. And further, the moral feeling is itself dependent upon conditions of a higher and more general order than those by which the political organisation is determined. We may therefore say briefly that the morality of a race, as it depends upon the most permanent conditions, represents its fundamental characteristics, and that the subordinate rules of conduct, whatever they may be, must be regarded as springing from them, and not *vice versâ*. Many laws, indeed, exist which are regarded as more or less immoral by large classes of the persons bound by them. The law does not cease to be a law because it is immoral, but certainly it has less chance of being anything but a law in name: and the only general principle must be that the characteristics which are most deeply seated and dependent upon the most permanent conditions must tend, however long the process, to override those which are relatively superficial and contingent. Further, it may be added that, in an ideal state of society, every general principle would also be recognised in every particular rule. This is a result, indeed, to which we must expect a gradual approximation rather than anticipate its actual attainment. So, for example, if the moral law commands kindliness and some particular rule prescribes a cruel action, we may say that if the society

is progressive (a condition which is of course necessary) some uniform rule must be worked out. Then, by hypothesis, kindliness has been discovered to be a quality characteristic of social vitality, and the rule can be laid down absolutely; whereas the rule which prescribes cruelty is the product of some particular combination of circumstances, and can only be stated conditionally. Hence we may say that the general tendency must be to bring about such a modification of sentiment that the superficial and exceptional rule may be superseded by one consistent with the general principle. The statement, however, as to the supremacy of morality and the conscience is generally, as I think, understood in a different sense, and as applicable to particular cases of conduct rather than to the position occupied by the moral sentiments in the general process of evolution. We shall come to this in a later chapter.

### V. *Basis of Morality*

29. So far, then, the argument has justified some of the predicates most generally applied to the moral law, though it imposes a certain interpretation upon them. By saying that a law is moral, we mean that it belongs to human beings as such, and not as belonging to any special class. This, in my view, amounts to saying that the moral law defines a property of the social tissue. Hence it must be natural, not artificial; it must grow, and not be made; for these properties are the intrinsic and underlying properties implied in all special societies, incapable of being abruptly altered by the action of any particular person, or in obedience to any subordinate series of events, and gradually developed as the society grows instead of being the fruit of special contingencies. The law must be eternal so far as anything human can be eternal, for it must be an approximate expression of the conditions of social vitality, as the instincts to which it corresponds are the instincts by which the life of the society is maintained; and it must therefore be as permanent as those conditions themselves. It varies only by development, as each step in the social evolution represents

a fuller solution of the problem of adapting a society formed of given materials and acting under fixed conditions to the needs which those conditions impose. Again, it must be capable of expression as a law of internal character, not as a law of external facts; for the only variable element is the character, and the problem to which it supplies an answer is the determination of the most effective qualities of character which can be developed in a given agent to make him an efficient member of society. In the infinite variety of circumstance, these qualities may manifest themselves in a corresponding variety of methods, which can never be adequately summed up or classified by external characteristics. And, finally, since these qualities represent the most general rules of action, such alone as can be stated absolutely—that is, without reference to varying circumstances—the law must be supreme. It deals with the first principles, the primary reasons to which every particular case must present a special application.

30. Supposing this to be admitted, we have still the critical problem before us. For the natural method would now be to deduce from the general principle the particular rules of conduct, and to show that they do in fact lead to the recognised moral law. There is, as I began by saying, a tolerable agreement as to the contents of that law, however wide may be the divergence as to its form. This being so, it would be absurd, as it would be really misleading, to affect the method of an *a priori* deduction. We know what are the conclusions to be reached, and need not speak as though we had before us nothing but the premisses. It will be enough to show that the general principles of morality can in fact be deduced from the theory laid down, without supposing that we are starting from that theory with perfectly unprepossessed minds, in search of any principles that may turn up. Certain general remarks, however, may be premised, to elucidate the nature of the investigation. We are to see how certain rules have been reached by the evolution of society from a period at which, as we assume, though attributing to our assumption no more than an approximate accuracy, the individual man



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had his present organisation, but at which society existed only in germ, and the custom upon which it depends had not been distinctly elaborated nor consciously accepted. We have to deal, then, only with the rules which have been created by society, or rather which have been evolved as society has evolved, the internal and the external processes being necessarily correlated, and not related as though one had appeared first and the other been moulded upon it.

31. Hence we have nothing to do with certain rules of conduct which are implied in the very constitution of the race, and which would certainly have to be stated as primary conditions of existence. Men must have certain appetites, hunger, the sexual instinct, and so forth, without which the race could not survive for a day. They are, again, implied in every later development; but we have only to do with the later modification, and not with the initial state. But, in the next place, it is clear that we might lay down many rules of conduct as necessary to the existence of society which cannot be regarded as properly moral. Thus, for example, the most obvious condition of the social or individual vitality is what we may roughly call the instinct of self-preservation. If men had no instinct which kept them from walking over precipices or swallowing fire, they would have a very precarious tenure of life. Nobody would be called moral for obedience to the rules formed from such instincts, nor even for obedience to the higher rules which are developed from them as society grows. The instinct of self-preservation becomes finer and more sensitive as the emotional and intellectual faculties are developed. We become aware of a greater number of conditions, measure them by more delicate tests, and are more sensitive to remote consequences. For the mere avoidance of fire, precipices, poisons, and so forth, we come to observe with more or less regularity a complex set of rules calculated to preserve our bodily health; but such rules are not generally regarded as moral at all. We do not say that a man is good because he takes care of his digestion or makes it a principle to take a certain quantity of exercise daily. Such conduct is denied to be moral, although we may call it prudent, because it is con-

sistent with selfishness, cruelty, falsehood, and other bad qualities. Briefly, it is admitted that, in some sense or other, morality implies action for the good of others; but to define that sense accurately is to solve some of the most vital moral problems. We may ask, in fact, whether it is or is not possible for any man to aim at the good of others as an ultimate end? and, again, whether it is necessary to moral conduct that the good of others should be consciously intended, or whether it is sufficient that it should be a natural consequence of the conduct in question? To give some answer to these and the allied questions will be one object of the following pages.

32. We may first recall a distinction, already stated, which will be relevant to this inquiry. Society, as I have said, may be regarded both as an aggregate and as an organism. There are certain qualities which we may suppose to vary in the individual without necessarily involving a change in the social structure. The relations of the parts may remain sensibly the same although the general vigour—the sum total of the energies involved—is increased or diminished. On the other hand, there are qualities in respect of which the reverse is true. No change can take place in them without implying a corresponding change in the character of the social union. The distinction is not absolute; for every change in any part of the organism must have some reaction upon all its other parts; but the distinction may be, or rather must be, made for purposes of classification. We must distinguish, that is, between such a quality as loyalty, which cannot be supposed to increase or diminish without altering the essential characteristics of the social tie, and such a quality as mere personal prudence, which would no doubt have a great influence upon the whole social organism, but which may be considered apart from that set of consequences and which immediately affects the total power of the community rather than the relation between its members. Some reference, whether erroneous or not, to this distinction seems to be implied in the criterion by which we judge whether a given rule does or does not belong to morality proper after we have admitted it to be a rule of social vitality. And this distinction may be made without

considering the further and most important question how far the quality which is actually and permanently essential to society considered as an organism, rather than to society considered as an aggregate, does or does not involve any conscious reference to the welfare of the society, or of others besides the agent. This is a question which demands a special discussion, and which, therefore, it is desirable to reserve as much as possible.

33. The question, therefore, which now has to be considered is the deduction of the moral rule from the general principle of social vitality, and with a reference to the question how they are distinguished from other rules deducible from that principle. If we have rightly assigned the germs to which the moral law belongs, we have still to consider how these germs may be divided into species, and what is the specific difference.

## CHAPTER V

### CONTENTS OF THE MORAL LAW

#### I. *The Law of Nature and Morality*

1. The law of nature has but one precept, 'Be strong.' Nature has but one punishment, decay, culminating in death or extirpation, and takes cognisance of but one evil, the weakness which leads to decay. From this, the most general point of view, we can make no distinction between the various instincts except in so far as they do or do not imply the vitality of the organism to which they belong. But when we regard the individual as an organism within an organism, the law takes different forms and requires to be differently stated, according to its mode of impact. In one great class of cases it applies to the instincts in respect of which society is an aggregate, and the conduct of each individual may vary without implying a corresponding variation in the social organisation. In the other class it applies to those instincts which are the vital forces of that association, and cannot vary without a corresponding variation in it. In one case the effect upon the individual is the primary effect, and the society is affected through its constituent units; in the other case, the units are affected through the society, and the law cannot be intelligibly stated without taking the social factor into account. This may be expressed again by saying that the great law, 'Be strong,' has two main branches, 'Be prudent' and 'Be virtuous.' To assign the mutual relations of these resulting codes, which, although distinguishable in abstract analysis, are so closely connected in the concrete, is the task upon which we must now enter. By some thinkers morality has been resolved into a particular case of prudence; according to

others, prudence may be resolved into morality, or both into right reason or into a desire for happiness. Let us consider how the case must be stated from our point of view.

2. This statement takes for granted the general nature of the distinction. It is, in fact, admitted that by the moral code we mean to refer not merely to the predicates already noted, such as the eternity, supremacy, and so forth, of the code, but also to its having in some sense or other a reference to the welfare of the society. What we have now to do is to substitute for that 'some sense or other' a more precise definition; and the task would be accomplished if we could deduce the particular laws of conduct from the laws of nature, and then show which of these laws coincide with the moral law and why. There is here the difficulty that the moral law has not been, and, if I am right, cannot be accurately codified, even if the agreement as to its contents were still closer than is actually the case. If we classify conduct by external marks, we have a variety of general rules, none of which are precise or unconditional. Thus, for example, we have such virtues and vices as generosity and avarice, which refer to a particular class of actions—namely, in this case, to dealings in money matters. If we proceed to ask for a more explicit account of what is meant by avarice, we find that moralists do not mean to condemn the love of money *simpliciter*; for money represents every material object of human desire, and to condemn them all would be to condemn life in the world. They really condemn certain excesses, and more especially those which imply selfishness. Avarice is the love of money so far as it implies a disregard of the claims of others, or, again, so far as it implies a defective appreciation of the higher enjoyments. To condemn avarice, then, is to condemn one kind of selfishness, and by implication to condemn it in many relations of life which have no relation to money. A classification proceeding by the various external applications of the internal principle would be endless, and involve repetitions and cross divisions. If, on the other hand, we take the other mode of defining morality, we find that the law reduces itself to one or two simple principles—to the statement, for example, that

we should love God and our neighbour; that we should hurt no one, and do to others as we would that they should do to us. But such statements are too general to be available for our present purpose.

3. To find a classification of the virtues which will not run into infinite detail or be a simple affirmation of the general principle, we may observe that the internal mode of classification suggests a method which will be sufficient for our purposes, and which corresponds to the ancient doctrine of the cardinal virtues. We may begin by considering the qualities which belong to the individual primarily, and ask how far they have any moral significance. The general formula of such virtues is, 'Be strong,' or, as we may put it, 'All weakness is an evil.' The simplest organism may be considered in respect of its strength or weakness, that is, its power of preserving its life under the various conditions of existence, and that before any complexity of social organisation has been reached. As the social development affects these qualities as well as the others more directly involved, the social pressure constitutes a law which may have some moral character. In the next place, the development is of two kinds, or may be regarded under two main aspects—the emotional and the intellectual. To each of these there belongs a characteristic moral law; for as soon as we can regard the individual as a complex organism, made up of different instincts and capacities for feeling, one main condition of vitality must refer to the strength and mutual relation of those instincts. Hence we have the virtues of which the general formula is, 'Be temperate,' or the correlative statement that all excess is an evil. These qualities, again, however modified in the higher phases of development, must exist in germ even before the animal is capable of anything that can be called reasoning, or of a conscious reference to the distant or the future. When we consider the intellectual development, we have a third class of virtues referring to the conditions of intellectual efficiency, the general formula being in this case, 'Be truthful,' and 'All falsehood is evil.' And, finally, as the social organisation becomes developed, and has special moods of sentiment corresponding to it, we have the

virtues which correspond directly to a condition of social vitality. The formula may be expressed in the social or common assertion that all injury to our fellows is an evil. I will not inquire whether this classification can be regarded as accurate or exhaustive. It will give us, at any rate, a clue to the inquiry quite sufficient for our purpose; that is, in fact, for showing how the specific difference understood by the word 'moral' is brought out in the code actually formed by our approvals and disapprovals, and what is the nature—so far as it can be defined—of the process by which the development is effected.

## II. *Virtue of Courage*

4. 'Be strong' is, I have said, the general precept of the law of nature. The strength of the society, again, is increased by the strength of its individual members. So far as each unit is stronger, braver, more energetic, and more industrious, more capable, therefore, of holding his own against external enemies or material disadvantages, so far is the society composed of such individuals stronger. This, indeed, must always be understood with reference to a tacit condition. If an increase of courage necessarily involved an increase of insubordination, we should have to ask whether the increased power of the individual soldier was cheaply or dearly bought by the weakened discipline of the army to which he belongs. But there is no necessary divergence between the two qualities. Increased energy may go along with increased power of co-operation; and therefore the rule, 'Be strong,' may be stated without referring to a condition which is generally latent, though, under particular circumstances, it may assert itself and demand attention. *Ceteris paribus*, we may say the increase of individual energy is an advantage to society; and, as a matter of fact, we find that the civilised society differs conspicuously from the ruder by stimulating more vigorously and systematically the various energies of its members. The most conspicuous virtue of this class is the virtue of courage. The deduction of courage from the general condition of social vitality is manifest. In cases where a society has to struggle

against external enemies, military excellence is the most obvious guarantee for its security, and in rude societies, military excellence is proportional to courage. Savage tribes may often be said to hold life at every moment upon the tenure of military prowess. And, moreover, it is plain that the same principle would hold good, not only where it is directly exemplified, but where there are apparent deflections from the rule. That is to say, that in cases where the external conditions are such as to give less importance to the military energies, courage is less highly estimated; and so, again, the particular kind of courage most in demand varies as fraud or force is the most effective weapon for the particular race and purpose. The most familiar instance is in the very different estimate which is placed upon courage in the two sexes. Moralists would hardly admit that the rule ought to be different; but they admit that, in point of fact, want of courage in men provokes contempt in most modern nations, and a want of chastity is regarded with comparative indifference; whilst in the case of women, the rule is altered: unchastity is held to be the most unpardonable of crimes, whilst cowardice, in some relations at least, is thought to be rather graceful than otherwise. Practical moralists lament these inconsistencies, and theorists have invented more or less ingenious hypotheses to account for them. The historical explanation is, within its own limits, simple and obvious. We may state that in early social stages fighting power was the critical or essential power for each race; that those in which it flourished most conquered, and often exterminated the rest; and thus that a cultivation of the military qualities, the most conspicuous of which was bravery, was a characteristic of the dominant races. The warrior was the natural leader, and the best warrior had the first choice of spoil, or the greatest chance of gratifying his passions. Naturally excellence in war was coveted and admired by every one. The estimate once fixed tends to prolong itself even when some of these conditions disappear. Every male child in a certain rank in England is still brought up from its cradle to value itself on being 'a gentleman;' and to be a gentleman is amongst other things, to be ready to take one's

own part with sword or fist. To women, on the other hand, has been assigned from the earliest period of the division of labour the class of social functions for which military excellence was not required. The savage acquired his wife by knocking her down; to him, therefore, the ideal feminine character must have included readiness to be knocked down, or at least unreadiness to strike again; and as some of the forms of marriage recall the early system, so in the sentiments with which it is regarded there may still linger something of the early instinct associated with striking and being struck.

5. Thus we may say that courage is a necessary condition of the vitality of a society so long as it depends upon military activity; and this implies that every man is in such a society trained to be brave in so far as his possession of that quality entitles him to respect and the advantages of being respected; and, again, in so far as he imbibes the current opinion by which the standard is fixed from his earliest period of conscious thought. The development of society implies a corresponding modification of this sentiment. The military virtues become less prominent as war occupies a smaller part of the total activities and is a less essential part of social efficiency. But there is simultaneously a change in the whole mode of thought. In an early social stage, we may suppose that the warrior who shrinks from danger is regarded with contempt and dislike; since the life of every member of the tribe may depend at any moment upon the prowess of his fellows, the whole social group is closely interested in the success of every one of its members. But, as society develops, new cases present themselves for classification. For, in the first place, there are brave enemies as well as brave champions of our own. What is the sentiment which they create? We may conceive it possible that a brave enemy might be considered simply as a more dangerous antagonist. He might be regarded with greater antipathy, just as a big wolf would be worse than a little one. But in the more civilised race the chivalrous sentiment begins to manifest itself in imperfect and fragmentary ways. In a comparatively civilised state, people still hate enemies at a distance in proportion to their courage, and set

it down as more or less diabolical; whilst at the same time they are capable of a true chivalry towards those with whom they are more nearly allied. The English and Scotch Borderers might respect each other's courage, and be the better friends when the fighting was over. They might, at the same time, regard courage in a Saracen as a bad quality, demanding a more undying antipathy. This growth of the chivalrous feeling implies, on the one side, a growth of sympathy, inasmuch as we are now capable of admiring the man who was beyond the pale of any common feeling; and, on the other hand, it may be regarded as involving an implicit generalisation. We say implicitly that we regard the brave enemy as intrinsically admirable in so far as he has shown a good quality, and objectionable only from the accidental circumstances which have made his interests incompatible with our own. We thus have virtually reached the general principle that courage in war is a valuable quality for its owner and his side, and therefore one which we can admire, although it may or may not be valuable to ourselves.

6. The increased intelligence or sensibility which makes such a judgment possible carries along with it other changes. In the early state, attention is fixed exclusively upon the simple case of military excellence. The warrior who runs away is doing me an injury, for the tribe has its interests so much in common that the bad conduct of one necessarily injures others. But as men become more intelligent and society more complex, this simple observation requires to be modified. For, in the first place, it must come to be perceived that courage *per se* is not necessarily a good quality. If, that is, courage be defined as simple insensibility to danger, it may obviously be carried to excess; and we imply this by the condemnatory phrase 'rashness.' Indeed it is so little a virtue, that cases may certainly be imagined in which what we call cowardice would be a virtue. There are races of animals which owe their safety to a lively perception of danger. The excellence of a hare consists in running away, and those hares which were best at running and also quickest at taking alarm would tend to survive, and set the standard of hare-morality.

If this is not the case with man, we can only explain it by the fact that, in the conditions of human life, military excellence is the necessary condition of success, and that military success requires courage. But courage, as we see, requires to be more accurately defined. 'Moral courage,' as it is called, tends to take the place of 'physical courage.' By moral courage we must understand not simple insensibility to danger, which is consistent with idiocy, but a power, as we say, of 'keeping our heads,' or, in other words, of reasoning as deliberately and acting as coolly under danger as when there is no danger. This quality would be as useful to hares as to men, and indeed is implied in the intellectual development; for it is simply a statement that a power of reasoning—that is, of consulting all relevant circumstances and acting in accordance with a sound judgment—is an essential part of practical reason. Courage, therefore, changes its quality to some extent, and we admire the kind of courage which is manifested by the general commanding under stress of great danger and heavy responsibility more than the simple courage of a soldier who walks up to a battery, or of a hunter who confronts a tiger in his jungle.

7. This, again, involves another process of implicit reasoning; it becomes manifest, in short, that courage cannot be considered by itself. We must determine its relations to the whole character, or we shall be admiring it in cases where it is absolutely prejudicial. Fighting, however, and so far courage, has been from an early period an essential condition of social vitality, and therefore the internal relations of the tribe and the various propensities of its members must have been developed with reference to this condition. It has always been a prominent condition, as in early times it was the most conspicuous and predominant condition; but as peaceful instincts have developed there must have been some correlating and harmonising influence. The military instinct is not necessarily incompatible with the industrial, but at any given period the one may be developed to the prejudice of the other. Where the race has been constantly, though in part unconsciously, occupied upon the great problem how to reconcile the two, and to secure at once efficiency in war and

efficiency in peace, one quality or the other may be in excess ; as there are races which are easily conquered, but which have great capacity for thriving and extending themselves when not encountered by enemies, and others in which the military spirit is so strongly developed that, although they can resist direct attacks, they are weak in adapting themselves to the material conditions of life. The races which survive are those in which there has been such a development that, on the whole, a maximum of efficiency has been reached by the best adaptation to divergent, though not naturally antagonistic, conditions of development. The distinction appears in the internal relations of any community ; for as peaceful relations become more prominent, it is evident that excellence of the military kind may be combined with bad qualities of another kind—that the bravest man or the best soldier may be lazy, dissolute, or tyrannical in his other relations, and that we must therefore substitute some more discriminating mode of judgment for that which was previously sufficient.

8. Hence arises the problem whether courage can be considered as a moral quality at all ; for it may be as well to make the remark, which will be frequently exemplified, that although we speak of the moral law as though it corresponded to a perfectly distinct mode of thinking and feeling, we are by no means entitled to assume that the actual demarcation is so sharp as our use of language suggests. In fact, we shall find that it is often exceedingly difficult to decide at what point we are to trace that special shade of feeling which may be called distinctly moral. The difficulty is the greater because there is no reason to suppose that the same sentiment exists in all members of a given society. The feelings with which they regard an admittedly wrong action may vary greatly according to individual idiosyncrasies, even though they agree in condemning the same actions or admiring the same qualities of character. This appears to be the case in the present instance. When asked whether courage is or is not a moral quality in the strictest sense, we must reply that at some periods it has been considered as not only a virtue, but the typical and cardinal virtue, whilst at others it begins to be

more or less doubtful whether it is, properly speaking, a virtue at all ; while, again, very different answers would probably be given upon this point by different classes of persons.

9. Remembering this, let us ask what are the facts as to the existing social code. If courage is intrinsically virtuous —if, that is, the bare fact that a man is brave entitles him to be called virtuous so far—we should have to admit that every manifestation of courage was virtuous, and we should call a man good because he met a tiger unflinchingly when he was simply engaged in sport. This, I think, would be rather a strained use of language, and we should decline to admit the goodness unless the quality was exerted for benevolent purposes ; as, for example, in saving the life of one of the tiger's victims. But in the latter case it seems that it is not in respect of his courage that the man is called virtuous, but in respect of his unselfishness or benevolence. Thus, to take a further case, we feel it to be a perfectly justifiable form of expression when Clarendon speaks of Cromwell as a 'bold, bad man.' Courage, we admit, may be combined with objectionable qualities, such as tyranny and hypocrisy. Shall we then consider courage to be in itself a morally neutral quality, which is good or bad according to the other qualities with which it is associated, and thus as simply an intensitive ? In that case, we ought in consistency to dislike the bad man more in proportion to his courage, in so far as it makes him a more mischievous person. This certainly does not represent our ordinary mode of feeling. The admission of courage qualifies our dislike. We respect the brave man, so far as brave, not only if he is an enemy by virtue of accidental circumstances, but even if he is a bad man by the intrinsic quality of character. Thus, if our judgment of Cromwell coincides with Clarendon's, we feel that our moral disapproval is tempered by a certain admiration ; we feel that, as brave, he is less hateful, even though he may be more mischievous than if he had combined his other bad qualities with cowardice. We regret that he had not better principles instead of regretting that he had so much vigour. This is virtually to admit that in so far as a man is brave he is approved by the general

feeling, although the approval is not exactly of the kind which we call moral. If we speak of some distinctly moral quality, the implicit reasoning would be different. Charles I., let us assume, was chaste but tyrannical. In so far as he was chaste he deserves moral approval, and in so far as tyrannical, moral disapproval. We have to settle the balance by conflicting considerations. But in the case of a Cromwell, the respect which we feel for his courage does not serve to qualify the moral verdict, but to represent a feeling which is intermediate between that of moral approbation and simple admiration for an endowment, physical strength and beauty, for example, which has no definite relation to moral judgment at all. It may be just worth while to add, that the difference cannot be explained by saying that courage is a simple property which does not involve 'free will,' or is incapable of being modified by the approval of others. How far this consideration affects our moral judgment need not be considered here, inasmuch as it obviously does not apply to this case. There is no quality which is more imminently amenable to opinion. The special characteristic of the warrior has always been taken to be his thirst for glory, and the fact that courage can be generated by discipline is one of the most familiar of observations.

10. It is, in fact, easy to put a logical interpretation upon the verdict of common sense; for it virtually asserts that courage is a quality which is useful to society: that it therefore forms a part of the good man's character; and thus that to call a man a good coward involves some inconsistency, although it is not inconsistent to speak of a bad brave man. Hence courage may be regarded as one of the necessary conditions of ideal excellence, though its possession does not necessarily imply the fulfilment of any other conditions. To be good, you must be brave; but you may be brave without being good. And therefore when we see courage united to wickedness, we regard the agent as in some degree qualified for our approval, though for a kind of approval differing from that reserved for what we call virtue in the most eminent degree. And the principle involved is obvious: namely, that courage does not imply necessarily a use of faculties for the good of

others. In rude states of society, as we have seen, this is necessarily (or almost necessarily) the case, inasmuch as the individual is so closely identified with his tribe, the objects of his animosity are so certain to be the objects dangerous to his fellows, that to be brave is to be socially useful. But as society develops we see that the necessity is external; that is, dependent upon a state of things which does not always exist in the higher stages; and hence we make a distinction, and whilst still admiring courage, we scarcely regard it with that specific kind of admiration reserved for qualities which, by their very nature, must be useful to others than the agent.

11. Let us now consider for a moment the nature of the process thus described. It supposes the development of a complex organisation and the growth of correlative instincts. The primitive society depends at every instant upon the military prowess of its members. Respect for the good fighter and contempt for the bad, respect, therefore, for courage and contempt for cowardice, as the most obvious conditions of good and bad fighting, appear as soon as the simplest reflection is possible. And this sentiment tends to persist, however formed originally, inasmuch as every one from childhood imbibes the habitual modes of thought and feeling of the social medium. But social development implies a process of at least implicit reasoning, which modifies the early assumptions. The chivalrous sentiment grows as hostilities cease to be internecine and sympathy extends beyond the limits of the community. Courage, again, takes a different form as men come to recognise the distinction between the higher and lower forms of the quality, and feel the advantage of discipline and subordination. Again, as the demand for warlike excellence declines, courage is valued so far as it can be combined with the full development of peaceful energies and instincts. Finally as men come to distinguish between the qualities which are essentially useful to society and those which may be combined with anti-social qualities, they regard courage with a sentiment differing from that which is reserved for the more directly social virtues. The process may therefore be regarded as a prolonged induc-

tion, starting by a condemnation of certain actions plainly mischievous to the society, and ending by the recognition of a certain type of character as admirable, which includes amongst its attributes a capacity for the conduct actually admired, but which also includes fitness for conduct of a different kind. Courage is now regarded as one manifestation of a character which is fitted for all the requirements of social existence. But as it may be turned against society, we scarcely regard the brave man as therefore virtuous, but rather as satisfying one of the conditions necessary to virtue. Thus the process implies the elaboration of a more complete definition of the type necessary to the constitution of a vigorous society, and thus the recognition of certain external rules of conduct—that, for example, which prohibits running away in battle, as defining particular manifestations of the typical character under specified conditions, and deriving their validity from the more general condition of social fitness.

12. Hence this statement suggests a question which requires a distinct answer. Courage in all its phases is a condition of social vitality. The spirit in which a race confronts danger must be always one criterion of its power of holding its own. But we may still ask how far the approval is generated by a perception of this fact. Is courage admired simply because it is useful or because it is seen to be useful? We have obviously no right to assume a perception in all cases. The average man accepts without reflection the standard of his race. The warrior may hate the coward as he hates the harmless necessary cat, without seeking a reason for his aversion. We may therefore explain the sentiment in any given case by saying that the man has derived it from his neighbours. But this, of course, is no explanation of the whole phenomenon. To explain this we must go back to the history of the race. The courage of an animal is 'explained' by the fact that it is necessary under the conditions of his life. The courage of a bulldog is a blind instinct; the blindness implying, not that he is without feeling of pain, or even perception of danger, for otherwise we could hardly speak of him as brave, but that danger or pain does not affect him as it affects a

cur, and that he holds fast when the cur lets go. Such an instinct may of course exist, and must exist, in the unreasoning animal in the absence of any reasoned calculation of consequences. The creature survives by reason of his instinct, but not because he forms any conscious judgment of the advantages of this mode of conduct. And when we rise to the reasoning agent we may still ask whether the utility of a given character implies, or in what sense it implies, a perception of the utility? The distinction requires to be noticed, inasmuch as certain ambiguities result from a neglect to take it into account.

13. Now it seems necessary to suppose that races owed their survival to military prowess when reflection was still in the most rudimentary stage. The utility of courage, indeed, must have been a very obvious discovery as soon as any reflection became possible. No condition of the preservation of a community could be so palpable or pressed by such constant and repeated experience upon the attention of its members. They could see every day that their existence depended upon the readiness to confront danger. But the quality must have existed in some degree before it could be discovered, and therefore it would be inaccurate to speak as though the approved of courage were the result of an antecedent perception that certain advantages were attainable by courage. Men came to recognise the advantages already obtained by the brave, and the recognition tended to intensify as also to modify the sentiment already implicitly existing. Every increase of reasoning power would bring out more fully the importance to the race and to the individual of courage, coolness, and resource in danger. The existence of any distinct moral sentiment doubtless implies some reflection, and there could hardly be a social approval or disapproval until men were capable of observing consequences. The approval may be, in that sense, the product of the perception; but, on the other hand, the perception implies that the instinct approved was already in existence. The race has a certain degree of courage, and must be so constituted that, in point of fact, the courage of one is useful to others, before the conscious recognition of the fact, and

before the definite emergence of a social approval. The difference is that in the higher stages of development the fact becomes a recognised fact. The other instincts are not only interested, but their interests are perceived. Formerly they were interested as slaves may be interested in the success of their owner; now as free men whose opinions have to be consulted. As reflection develops, men come to have a wider perception of the bearing of their conduct in every direction, and this perception modifies the actions and instincts; but it must always start from a pre-existing organisation of character and society.

14. And hence we may state more precisely the sense in which the notion of courage is a statement of the general conditions of social vitality. The problem is more complex than appears at first sight. It has, we may say, a double aspect. The 'utility' of courage, meaning by utility the fact that the braver race is so far the better qualified for the struggle of existence, is in all cases the cause of the survival of the instinct. That is equally true whether we speak of a blind or a reasoned instinct, of the bulldog or of the hero, and gives the general principle applicable at every stage of the process of evolution. The principle applies to the particular case of the reasoned instinct developed through the social factor, and governs it as the general rule governs the special application. The instincts of any race must comply with the conditions of its existence, and this must be true as well of the instincts which imply a perception of utility. The approval of any conduct as useful must itself be useful, if the race is to survive.

15. The necessity of calling attention to this distinction is already manifest. For, in the first place, the conditions do not at present appear to be necessarily coincident. Courage, we say, is useful; or is, in other words, a condition of the existence of the race. So far as the race becomes conscious of this fact, the same condition applies to this consciousness. The consciousness, that is, that courage is useful to the race must stimulate courage. Now it may appear that this is not a necessary result of increased intelligence. If, in fact, we

suppose the intellect to become keener without any increased desire for social welfare, which is clearly possible in individual cases, the clearer perception of the social utility of courage could only stimulate it in cases where the interest of the individual was identical with that of his fellows. It might then, on the average, produce cowardice, or a desire of each to save himself whenever he could do so at the expense of his fellows. In that case, increased intelligence would operate so far to the disadvantage of the race, as the stupider and therefore bolder races would have a better chance of survival. Something of this kind seems occasionally to happen. Looking, indeed, at the facts, and observing that the more intelligent races have an advantage, and not least in this quality, we must infer that the general principle operates differently. Evolution affects the whole nature; and we may suppose that those races are most successful which are so constituted that a perception of the vitality of courage goes along with an increase of courage. This, however, seems to imply an additional condition. The race must not simply become more intelligent, but become more intelligent in such a way that its social qualities improve along with its intellectual. The bare extension of a perception of consequences might of itself tend only to more calculated selfishness, and therefore a diminished disposition to fulfil the conditions of social welfare. It may appear that in the normal case, at least, the intellectual advance implies a development of the social sympathies; but that cannot be taken for granted at present.

16. There is, however, in the second place, a further consideration. It is clear from the nature of the process described that there must be a close coincidence between the qualities which are valued and those which are actually useful. Each man and generation of men starts with a sentiment, elaborated by the race and embodied in the accepted rules of conduct. The most important are worked into the very structure of the language and ingrained in the organic customs of society. Respect for courage, in particular, has become part of the general inheritance and profoundly influences the character of every member of a society which has passed through a military

stage. Now, on the one hand, it is clear that any sentiment thus transmitted through the social factor, must have a reference to the conceptions of social vitality. All men could not agree to admire courage unless they thought that courage was useful—useful, that is, in the second or subjective sense, namely, of generally tending to procure happiness. The process by which any such sentiment is transmitted and diffused, so as to be part of the general inheritance of the race, is a sufficient guarantee for this. Men may agree to admire qualities which make their possessor unhappy, but not at once to admire a quality and to think that it diminishes happiness in general. The perception that a quality is in this sense useful or *felicific* must nearly coincide with, if it does not generate, the admiration felt for the quality; and, on the other hand, it is clear that the actual utility of courage will generate admiration as soon as the fact is perceived. If the existence of a tribe really depends on the courage of its members, it must become apparent that in numberless special cases courage preserves the lives and happiness of all, whilst cowardice is fatal. What is useful as preservative must also be useful in the sense of happiness-giving. Within certain limits men may reason badly, and even the collective reasoning may be bad. Courage may be the object of an extravagant admiration from the survival of prejudices generated under special conditions, or a temporary absence of danger may lower the estimate; but any wide deviation from the correct judgment will be rectified, if not by the reason of the society, then by the operation of the general principle of utility, and the tendency of the erring society to disappear. This principle, therefore, must be regarded as working, not only through the blind and more or less unconscious instinct of the lower races, but upon the conscious and reflective judgments of the most highly organised society. In an ideal state there would be an absolute coincidence. The society would not only possess those instincts which are necessary to its survival and vigour, but would understand precisely how, in what respects, and under what conditions or limitations, they were necessary; whilst its judgment of what was useful as giving happiness would pre-

cisely coincide with its judgment of what was useful as preservative of its existence.

17. These remarks are of course applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, not only to courage, but to other qualities, such as industry, energy, and so forth, which belong to the same class; and, moreover, as we shall presently see, to the virtues in general. And it may be as well to make one remark before finishing. The ultimate and governing principle is in all cases the utility of the quality, in the sense in which utility means fitness for the conditions of life. The scientific explanation, at any rate, cannot get beyond an exposition of the essential implication of courage in the general conditions of social life. And this general principle may operate through an unreasoning or a reasoned instinct; that is, through the instincts of a being conscious or unconscious of their value. Now, although morality proper is only possible when reflection and a power of grasping general rules has been developed, this has still an application even to the higher stages of social growth. For a man, or even a race, may be content to accept the instinct as justifying itself without seeking to discover its origin. And, again, a moral development may be brought about either by a reasoning or unreasoning process; either by a process of generalisation and the conscious aim at some social ideal implying an accurate perception of the conditions of life; or, on the other hand, by some 'accidental' change, that is, by a change originating in other conditions than those of intellectual growth, as when the extension of an empire forces peaceful habits upon previously hostile tribes, and so favours the growth of tastes and pursuits previously impossible. I need not now inquire which is the normal and most important case.

### III. *Virtue of Temperance*

18. Proceeding to the virtues typified by chastity and temperance, we have first to remark that they occupy an intermediate position between the virtues of strength and the directly social virtues. Some of them are a part of the prudential, and others of the directly moral code. Thus, for

example, it is prudent to be temperate because temperance is necessary to health. Any rules deduced from that consideration are primarily concerned with the individual, and interest the society through the individual. The primary objection to drunkenness is that it injures the constitution, and if I prove from purely medical considerations that certain drinks are injurious and others innocuous, the rule deduced is a law of prudence and consequently a part of morality. It is my duty, it may be said, to maintain my health unless some other moral duty accidentally conflicts, and thus the rules for framing health may be taken up into the moral code; but they are deduced without reference to the society from the simple principle that whatever increases the health of each man is so far a matter of prudence. The society composed of healthy men is so far better, but the rule is deduced from a direct consideration of the individual, and the sanitary rule coincides with, because it is assumed by, the moral rule. That is right which is health-preserving. But another class of these virtues is directly social. In fact, society is dependent from its very germ upon the sexual and parental instincts; its most intimate structure depends at every moment upon the way in which they are regulated; and conduct, which from the sanitary point of view may be perfectly indifferent, may have the most important effects upon the social organisation. Temperance in eating and drinking is a dictate of simple prudence, which has no need to take into account the consequence to others; but chastity is a virtue which is only intelligible when we take into account its bearing upon the vitality of the social organism.

19. Hence we have a moral evolution similar to the former. Chastity, that is, some modification of the sexual instincts imposed by the social sentiment, is implied in the earliest stages of social growth. Society is constituted by the development of an organic custom which defines, amongst other things, the relations of the sexes. The marriage law of primitive times differs in strange and unexpected ways from that of civilised races, but it implies at every step the existence of some restraining sentiment. Sexual rivalry is the great

cause of hostility amongst Yahoos; whilst the state and the family are barely distinguished, the disputes about women are a main cause of war. The formation of the social bond implies the formation of some *modus vivendi* in regard to such matters, and a complex system of rules is developed at a very early date. Hence the external rule is formed before a more general theory of the passions has obtained acceptance. The first law is, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' Little attention is aroused by conduct not so clearly injurious. The savage sees no evil in gluttony, and intoxication appears to him as a new pleasure revealed by the civilised man. In the higher law the rule is extended, and applies to the motive as well as to the specific action. Lust is condemned as well as adultery. The man who would sin if he could is seen to be as objectionable as the man who sins because he can. And the condemnation extends itself to all forms of sensuality in virtue of the general principle thus elaborated, as their effect upon the character of the agent and their remoter consequences to others are better understood.

20. To the savage, as to the animal, gluttony scarcely appears to be objectionable. The conduct of either is regulated by his appetite without any conscious reference to general principles. The force and the nature of these appetites are determined by the general principle of utility. The savage, like the dog, eats when he is hungry and drinks when he is thirsty without regard to consequences. If his appetites were such as to be inconsistent with his permanent survival, he would die out. Therefore his instincts are correlated by a process which has nothing to do with conscious reflection. But when the man acquires new powers by incipient civilisation, the conditions of his life are altered. He is able if he pleases to eat and drink more than is good for him. If the old instincts survived and were not restrained, he would speedily eat and drink himself to death. They may grow weaker in virtue of some physiological principle, but they may also be held in check by his clearer perception of the evil consequences of indulgence. In the latter case we have the growth of a moral and a prudential law. The reasoning man

does not require, we may say, to lose the appetite because he is able to counterbalance its action by calling other forces into play. He sees that the present gratification will have to be paid for at a certain rate of future pain. But the moral quality of the rule only becomes marked when there is some recognition of the effects to others than himself. Now it becomes evident that sensuality generally has a direct bearing upon the social qualities, even in those forms which are primarily objectionable on prudential grounds. Courage and energy generally are of course clearly connected with temperance; and so far as courage is regarded as a virtue, the slothfulness and indifference which spring from all forms of intemperance incur a share of the contempt bestowed upon the quality which is their natural fruit. But, on the other aspect, they have a more intrinsic bearing upon social vitality than the virtues of strength. The brave man may still, as I have said, be a thoroughly bad man; he may use all his energy to oppress his neighbours. To some extent this is also true of the temperate man, but the connection with the social qualities is more direct and invariable. So far as a man is a drunkard, he is almost necessarily a bad husband and father; so far as temperate, he is free from some of the weaknesses which must generally disqualify him from acting in that capacity. Courage and energy may often be essential, and are generally useful, in the discharge of the duties resulting from every social relation, but they are not so closely implicated, and for a reason which becomes obvious as men become more intelligent. Sensuality, that is to say, implies selfishness. A man's love of his bottle is so much deducted from his love of his wife and children. So far as he is taken up with the gratification of his appetites, there is less room for the development of his affections. A coward and a sluggard may be affectionate, though his affection will be comparatively useless to its objects, but in a sensual character the affections are killed at the root. He is incapable of really loving as well as of being useful to those whom he loves. And thus we may explain the moral verdict passed upon certain kinds of conduct which, on the ordinary judgment of common sense, are classi-

fied as 'self-regarding.' The most conspicuous evils caused by some actions are produced upon the man himself. People are inclined to regard them as breaches of prudence rather than of morality. The intemperate man, according to the common phrase, is an enemy to no one but himself. We have, as we fancy, no right to object to him so long as he only makes a beast of himself in private. In some cases, again, this leads to the production of a kind of spurious moral code. People admire the 'good fellow' as they admire the spendthrift, because the immediate and obvious consequences of his conduct are agreeable to his neighbours. Convivial relationship generates a sort of law of its own, in virtue of which the person who drinks fair and takes his wine like a man is admired, partly because his prowess is taken as a proof of vigour, and partly because he is 'sociable' in the lower sense of the word, and is therefore assumed to be sociable in a higher sense. As the reason develops it becomes clear that both the spendthrift and the drunkard are really mischievous, and that the prevalence of the conduct which they practise is a mark of social decay. And, more generally, it appears that we make a false estimate when we confine our attention to the immediate consequences of a man's actions. It is impossible really to maintain the distinction assumed. A man whose vice injures only himself in the first place, becomes also by a necessary consequence incapable of benefiting others. If he is an enemy to himself alone, he is also a friend to himself alone. The opium-eater, for example, paralyses his will; so far as he becomes incapable of energetic action, he is unfitted for every social duty, and so far as he becomes the slave of his appetite, becomes also unfitted for the social sentiments. Thus a distinctly moral sentiment exists, and its verdict is justified by logic in cases where the primary effect of conduct tells upon the agent himself. In some cases, the feeling of disgust and abhorrence is perhaps more strongly excited by such vices than by others more directly anti-social. And this is justified by the consideration already explained in a different connection. As we condemn the man whose character is bad, whether external circumstances do or do not give him an

opportunity for displaying it, so we object logically to the man who is destroying his social qualities, whether the immediate effect of his conduct tells upon himself or upon others. He must be defective in characteristics essential to the moral type.

21. So far the case seems to be clear; that is, the moral law does in fact come to condemn those qualities in respect of which the individual deviates from the type prescribed by the conditions of social welfare. But there is another characteristic of the virtue of temperance which requires a little more consideration. In the first place, the disgust which we feel for some conduct seems to be inadequately explained by the considerations just offered. Undoubtedly the condemnation of sensuality goes along with a perception of the many and complicated social evils which spring from it, and implies a recognition that a tendency to such indulgence is a fatal symptom of social decay. But the feeling of disgust seems to be a direct product of what we may call physiological causes. As the intellectual sensibility becomes keener, a pure-minded person is revolted by the sensual indulgence of the grosser, and resents the attempt to explain his disgust by a simple perception of the mischiefs produced. The feeling which exists in a healthy state of society is so strong and immediate that it seems to precede any utilitarian calculation; and I may add that, as a matter of fact, utilitarians have found a special difficulty in accounting for or justifying the strength of the prevailing sentiment, and are sometimes inclined to relax the severity of the code. Many people object to any attempt even to discuss the question, partly because they feel that there is a moral danger in even talking about certain subjects, and partly, perhaps, because they are afraid that their prepossessions may not be fully justified.

22. This, again, seems to be connected with another peculiarity of the moral judgment in this direction. I speak of the ascetic theories which at different times acquire so much strength, and which may in some forms appear to be a negation of the very principle of morality as I have stated it. In some cases the natural morality of a race appears not only to condemn intemperance—that is, an excessive addiction to

sensual pleasures—but condemns sensual pleasure in itself. It regards every pleasure of the kind as in itself bad, although indulgence may be permitted under certain restrictions as a safeguard against worse evils. Now if this were to be taken in the fullest sense, it is plain that it would condemn conduct which is not only productive of pleasure, but which is absolutely essential to the preservation of the species; and, in fact, men are admired and regarded as entitled to special reverence for a complete abstinence from some of the functions on which society depends. The virgin and the hermit are regarded as admirable because they withdraw from direct participation in social and domestic pleasures and duties; and thus, though moralists have laid it down as a universal rule of morality that every man should act so that his conduct may be a rule for all, yet some moralists regard action as specially admirable which cannot be a rule for all. It would be easy, of course, to reply that such morality is really immoral; that it implies erroneous reasoning, and would therefore be condemned by the right reason; or that, as it would diminish happiness, it cannot be conducive to the greatest happiness, and is therefore not moral according to the proper definition of the word. But, from my point of view, this is to evade the question, inasmuch as I find it impossible to deny that such sentiments, whether right or wrong, mischievous or beneficial, are a part of actual morality—that is, of the fundamental rules of conduct impressed upon the individual by the race—and therefore require to be explained instead of being simply denounced.

23. There is this difficulty in every explanation, that it is by no means easy to say what is the actual judgment in such cases. The common opinions often differ widely from those of authorised expositors, and there are innumerable devices by which doctrines apparently absurd may be accommodated to the dictates of common sense. This much, however, may perhaps be taken for granted: the ascetic theory is the product of a luxurious state of society—that is, of a state in which the abuses of sensual indulgence have become specially prominent. The growth of a rich and powerful class which

uses its power exclusively for its own enjoyment, in which great men plunge themselves into sensuality with indifference to the sufferings of their dependants, suggests the doctrine that sensuality is the great enemy of mankind, and naturally suggests an exaggerated statement of the advantages of the opposite character. The best teachers see that the passions are strong enough, so to speak, to take care of themselves; there is not the least danger that men will be too little sensitive to downright animal enjoyment; and therefore they denounce that evil unsparingly, and think that they can cut it up by the roots by denouncing the source of mischief, without supplying those qualifications which will be sufficiently supplied by the facts.

24. Further, it is to be remarked, there seems to be a kind of tacit recognition of the fact that the principle has a limited application. The virtues are divided into two classes—the ordinary and the heroic. A man is held to have fulfilled the law if he is chaste and temperate enough not to indulge in adultery and intoxication; but he has done something more if he is so chaste and temperate as to suppress all indulgence of one kind, and to confine the other within the limits necessary for the support of life. He is then not only good, but good enough for two. This, again, is implied in the theory of merit. Whatever else may be intended by that word—which will have to be considered hereafter—it recognises in some shape a certain normal standard applicable to every man, but which some men may transcend and by transcending acquire merit. Now in the theological doctrines generally associated with the theory it is supposed that the merit thus acquired is in some way useful to the race. It propitiates the gods, and makes them look more kindly upon the followers of the saint. The man, therefore, who possesses heroic virtue is not anti-social, although his conduct is such as, if universally adopted, would destroy society. He is rather to be compared to a man who sacrifices life and health in the pursuit of some philanthropic purpose, and in this sense his conduct might be approved by other moralists. We may, for example, think that a Howard is admirable, although he neglects duties

which must be performed in the ordinary case. He does more good in this particular instance by improving the condition of prisoners than by attending, for example, to his own affairs. This, however, merely admits that the general moral rule of benevolence prescribes different conduct according to a man's special opportunities and talents. So it might be admitted by all moralists that in special cases a man of peculiar temperament might find it right to suppress instincts which should generally be allowed to regulate his conduct. The difference would only be that such suppression would not be regarded as unconditionally right, or as establishing, by itself, a title to superior respect.

25. It seems, therefore, to be quite possible to express the ascetic theory in a form which is consistent with a reasonable conception of social needs. We have, in fact, only to say that, in a condition of society characterised by sensuality and selfishness, the existence of men capable of refusing all sensual gratification may be of the highest value, if only as a demonstration of the possibility of conquering the prevailing passions. Further, it may well be that in such a state the best, and, so far, the most meritorious men, and those who are most sensitive to the social evils of the time, may show by their lives the possibility of such conquest, and may, so far, deserve the respect of their fellows. As the Red Indian proved his courage by submitting to tortures, the saint may prove his temperance and chastity by refusing all indulgence; and such examples of transcendent virtue may tend to raise the average standard. They are a forcible protest in flesh and blood against the tyranny of the grosser natures. It is needless to dwell upon the dangers of the doctrine, upon the erroneous assumptions with which it is associated, or upon the limitations within which it should be confined. I only say that it is so far perfectly compatible with a view deduced from general considerations of social welfare, and that it errs in attributing an absolute value to conduct valuable only under certain conditions. So long as these conditions are fulfilled in fact, the error of neglecting their importance will not lead to immediate error; and thus an instinct which

seems to neglect all reference to the conditions of social welfare may, in fact, be the direct product of those conditions. It corresponds to the disgust produced by certain evils which arises spontaneously, and does not imply an accurate recognition of the true nature of the evils, and thus condemns absolutely what is only relatively bad.

26. Hence follows a conclusion which has been already noticed: namely, that the general condition of the utility of a moral sentiment cannot be identified, except under certain limitations, with the condition of a perception of the utility of the corresponding rule. Thus, when we speak of the disgust produced by certain conduct, and proceed to ask whether the disgust can be justified by the presumed consequences, we sometimes fall into a perplexity. Are we or are we not to take into account as amongst those consequences the disgust itself? Is the offended faculty entitled to a seat on the bench, or is it only entitled to a hearing as a witness? In the former case, we seem to be falling into a circular argument and making the instinct its own justification. In the latter, we may ask why this particular kind of pain should be less regarded than any other in estimating the total consequences. The answer, I think, is simple from a right point of view. When we say that conduct or instinct is bad, we clearly make one assumption: namely, that it can be eliminated, and that the conduct or instinct which takes the place of that condemned will be better. When I say that vice is mischievous, I must mean that, on the whole, and taking in everything implied in a change assumed to be possible, the temperate man is better fitted for social duties, or, which is the same thing, that a society formed of the temperate is better adapted for persistence than a society formed of the vicious. It is a manifest fallacy if I compare the two things only in respect of a particular set of differences which happen to be conspicuous on the surface, or if I fail to make a real comparison between possible states, and therefore make a false assumption as to the true alternatives.

27. Now, in the case before us, let us consider some vice, say gluttony, which is specially contemptible, but which

would perhaps generally be classed as self-regarding, inasmuch as it does not imply the existence of malice and direct attacks upon others. To estimate the evil of gluttony fairly, I must compare the gluttonous man, including all that is implied in glutton, with the temperate man. If I try to sum up the consequences of gluttony, I shall probably think first of the evils to health, of the consequences in the shape of gout, indigestion, and so forth. But this gives a very imperfect measure of the social evils of gluttony. The difference between the glutton and the temperate man is not that one is more exposed than the other to certain diseases, or that in consequence of the diseases he is less capable of strenuous activity. It is also that the man who is a slave of his belly is less capable of all the higher affections, of intellectual pleasures or æsthetic and refined enjoyments, and presumably selfish and incapable of extensive sympathies. If, then, my disapproval of gluttony is measured by the first set of consequences alone, it is manifestly inadequate. It is as though my estimate of the evils due to a disease were confined to certain special symptoms, and not to the total constitutional state implied. As a matter of fact, the sentiment actually entertained for the gluttonous man includes an element which is not measurable by the estimate of the imprudence implied in gluttony, nor of the general incapacitation which may be the most conspicuous result. It is rather an intrinsic feeling due to the conflict between the higher and the lower type, a spasm of disgust which is produced as directly as the rising of the gorge at any offensive object. The sight of the human hog revolts us, as we should say, simply because he is a hog, and the smell of the sty turns our stomachs. Wherever such an intrinsic feeling exists, it cannot be justified by summing up the ' consequences ' in the manner described. It is a feeling as much as any other which so far justifies itself, that the pains and pleasures due to it must be reckoned in our calculation. But this does not imply that this intrinsic feeling or instinct is not to be measured by a standard derived from the general principle of utility. When we ask whether it is useful, we do not mean

to ask whether it implies a right estimate of the other consequences of the conduct—that is, of the collateral results which are offensive to other instincts ; for this is virtually to assume that it has no independent existence, but is only a special application of those instincts to the foreseen consequences. We must also ask whether it is useful in the sense of being a necessary part of the higher type of character. As men become more intellectual, sympathetic and so forth, they gain fresh sensibilities, which are not simple judgments of consequences hitherto improved, but as direct, imperative, and substantial as any of the primitive sensibilities. Hence the justification of the instinct is not that it implies a judgment of what is useful, but rather that it is a useful judgment. To get rid of the sensibility you must lower the whole tone of the character or destroy the perception of consequence Therefore some such sentiment is essential to social development, though it is difficult or impossible to obtain any accurate measure of the desirable strength. That is a problem which can only be worked out by actual experiment.

28. This would appear to follow psychologically from the fact that the excess in question (and this is of course equally applicable to other sensual excesses) is itself prompted by a direct instinct. It is a morbid development of a certain appetite ; and it would seem that the disgust which we feel for the excesses of others is a direct result of the correlative impulse in ourselves. We are shocked by the excess of the glutton, because our imagination is revolted when we put ourselves in his place, and fancy ourselves consuming the same monstrous masses of food. The question of the degree in which it is desirable to cultivate this instinct must be difficult, because every direct instinct is in its nature incapable of such measurement. When we are estimating the consequences of conduct in the ordinary sense, we may sometimes have an available test. We are asking whether the pain given, for example, by an attack of gout is greater or less than the pleasure of a series of good dinners, and we may conceive at least that in some cases the sum is fairly easy, and admits of some approximate estimate. But when we ask whether a

certain instinct is on the whole useful, and in what degree, we are really asking the enormously complex problem whether the man who has it, together with all that is implied in it, is on the whole a better or worse member of society than the man who has it not, together with all that is implied in its absence. It is clearly impossible to reduce the comparison between two organisms to any direct process of calculation, though we may at least attempt to calculate the quantities of happiness in two different sets of actions; and hence it follows that the strength of the instinctive emotions of disgust which we have been considering may vary widely without being capable of immediate regulation by any reasoning process. This may go to explain why the disgust excited by particular vices, or, again, the admiration for their contraries implied in the æsthetic theories of morality, is apt to deviate very widely from any assignable measure of immediate utility.

### IV. *Virtue of Truth*

29. I may now proceed to the virtues which are in some respects at the opposite pole. It needs no demonstration that some regard for truth is implied in the simplest social state. Language is at once the product of society, and essential to anything that can be called society. No mutual understanding can exist without a communication of thought of which language is the most perfect and the indispensable instrument. To say that language is necessary is to say that truth is necessary, for otherwise we should speak of signs which have no signification. Lying itself is only possible when some degree of mutual understanding has been reached, and truthfulness is therefore an essential condition of all social development. Yet even the virtue of truth is often recognised gradually and with many limitations. As the law of chastity takes the form, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' the law of truth appears in the form, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness.' Those lies are forbidden which are palpably injurious to our neighbours. The imperfect respect entertained for truth in general is indicated by the practice of judicial oaths. This seems to

imply a kind of tacit assumption that the duty requires some extrinsic sanction. We might suppose the wickedness of taking away a man's life by a false statement to be so obvious that a man restrainable by no other motive would hardly be influenced by the sanctity of an oath. The fact, therefore, that oaths are regarded as efficacious in such cases shows the faintness of the average sensibility to the virtue. Lying to an enemy, again, is often regarded as at least pardonable, even when cruelty is seen to be wrong. The obligation to truthfulness is limited to relations with members of the same tribe or state; and, more generally, it is curious to observe how a kind of local or special morality is often developed in regard to this virtue. The schoolboy thinks it a duty to his fellows to lie to his master, the merchant to his customer, and the servant to his employer; and, inversely, the duty is often recognised as between members of some little clique or profession, as soon as it is seen to be important for their corporate interest, even at the expense of the wider social organisation. There is honour among thieves, both of the respectable and other varieties. So the agreement of gamblers to pay debts of honour and the respect paid to hospitality in rude countries are familiar instances of the growth of a partial morality, wherever it is plainly the interests of a class to have a mutual understanding. Finally, it may be noticed that truthfulness in the highest sense must be of slow development because only partially intelligible. The child cannot lie because it cannot speak the truth; so long, that is, as it is unable to distinguish between the creations of its own fancy and the facts perceived in the external world. Telling stories has for it the ambiguous sense of lying or relating avowed fiction. In the same way it appears that the infantile man produces myths and fables, and all manner of superstitious beliefs, without a distinct perception of the difference between imagination, hypothesis, and historical statement. Fiction in the modern sense and downright lying have the same root, and only come to be clearly differenced at a comparatively advanced stage. The inheritance of such figments, especially in the matter of religious belief, continues to perplex men's minds.

The virtue of philosophical truthfulness is only now obtaining recognition, and the process by which it has won recognition is an interesting illustration of the general principle.

30. It is easily perceived that an erroneous belief is injurious to society, and there is a tacit recognition of this in the conviction that a man who insults the god of his tribe may bring down evil upon his tribesmen. As moral rules are implicated with theological beliefs, indifference to either implies indifference to the other; nothing, then, is more natural than the hatred, and consequently the persecution, of the heretic. The change is chiefly brought about by the slow perception that a man's beliefs are accidental and dependent upon his social surroundings, and that the man himself, therefore, is estimable so far as he is sincere, not so far as his conclusions are right. Even at a very late period the enunciation of that simple principle was regarded with horror, and it has come to be admitted only by the accumulating evidence which has demonstrated that the difference between the orthodox and the heterodox does not coincide with that between good and bad. Yet the process is still so imperfect that the virtue of toleration is still considered rather as an external than an internal rule. It is generally admitted that persecution is a blunder, as it is admitted—by many people, at least—that protection is a blunder; but everybody allows that a good man may be a protectionist, inasmuch as the evil consequences are not so manifest to all understandings that an advocacy of protection necessarily implies indifference to the welfare of the race. In the same way the persecutor may have been deluded as to the effect of his measures rather than deficient in sympathy with his kind. The growth, however, of an adequate perception of the value of truthfulness in its highest sense would make this impossible. A thorough conviction that the welfare of the race depends upon its intrinsic character, and not upon the special results attained in any given stage of inquiry, would show that persecution was necessarily injurious to the interests of the society, and therefore confine the practice to those who were indifferent to such injury. As the respect paid to courage

comes to be given equally to the man who fights on our side or against us, in consequence of the accidents of position, so we should respect truthfulness whether the results obtained were in agreement or not in agreement with our own opinions.

31. So far, then, we may say of truthfulness, as we have said of other classes of virtue, that the morality emerges in the form of a condemnation of particular kinds of conduct seen to be pernicious to the society, and gradually passes into the recognition of a certain quality as implied in the realisation of the highest social type. But we have now to consider a respect in which it differs from the other virtues. We may notice in the first place that the obligation to a certain definite external mode of conduct is generally stated as absolute. Philosophers have deduced all virtues from truth, and this absoluteness of the statement is favourable to the method; for though purity and courage give rise to rules which are almost invariable, such as fidelity in marriage or to military obedience, still they seem to include an empirical element. The particular marriage law, for example, may vary, and it is conceivable at least that polygamy may be the rule in one period and monogamy in another, while the decision as to the superiority of either rule would depend upon variable conditions of human life. The rule of truthfulness, on the other hand, seems to possess the *à priori* quality of a mathematical axiom. It seems possible to say that it is always right to speak the truth, as it is always true that two and two make four. Truth, in short, being always the same, truthfulness must be unvarying. Thus 'Be truthful' means, 'Speak the truth whatever the consequences, whether the teller or the hearer receives benefit or injury.' And hence, it is inferred, truthfulness implies a quality independent of the organisation of the agent or of society. The agent should act as if he were a pure intellect. Nothing is so truthful as a calculating machine, which grinds out the same results, whether they give pleasure or pain. The preceding virtues imply a certain equilibrium between the passions; we cannot define 'excess' without taking into account the constitution of the persons affected; but the rule of truthfulness is inde-

pendent of any such considerations and underlies them all. A conception of truth is implied in all reasoning, for reasoning is nothing but a perception of truth and error. Thus to convey truth to others is apparently the simplest possible rule, and capable of the most absolute statement; and thus, it is supposed, we may reach the rule, 'Be truthful,' without more reference to society than we make in asserting a geometrical or a logical axiom.

32. We must ask, then, whether this absoluteness of the rule really affects the doctrine that it expresses a condition of social welfare. Moralists agree approximately in the admission that truthfulness is an essential condition of the welfare of society as known to us. This, according to me, is the ultimate ground, in a scientific sense at least, of its moral value. The attempt is still made to represent the principle as possessing an authority independent of any social consideration. A different rule, it is said, would not only be mischievous—that is, inconsistent with social development—but self-contradictory. So far as this asserts anything more than this, that even a slight social advance implies some degree of truthfulness, it appears to me to be erroneous, or at least unprovable. If for the rule, 'Speak the truth,' we could substitute the rule, 'Tell lies,' it is quite true that neither language itself nor the simplest of existing social institutions could have been developed. To invert the rule of truth would imply such a change as would necessitate a modification of some of the apparently most essential attributes of humanity. Yet even in this case the rule, 'Deceive,' is not in a formal sense more contradictory than the rule, 'Do not deceive,' and perhaps it would be possible to imagine conditions under which mutual deception might be profitable to a race. Undoubtedly such a race would have to do without language, and without many other things which are essential to society as we know it. The state of truthfulness is as essential to society as you please, but it is illegitimate to confound this doubtless important statement with the statement that the opposite rule is logically impossible. Universal lying is not self-contradictory; it is only impossible within the whole range of our knowledge.

33. In the next place, the fact, if it were a fact, that the direct inversion of the rule was contradictory, would not prove the rule itself to be necessary. The moral rule might conceivably be, 'Speak truth to your friends and lie to your enemies,' or, 'Speak truth when it is not plainly inconvenient;' just as the moral rule may be, 'Kill not, unless in war or by due form of law, and do not drink more than is good for you.' This is not only conceivable, but is a fact of actual morality. The rule of truthfulness, as I have said, is understood, in fact, with many limitations, and is still far from being universally and thoroughly carried out; and these limitations correspond to the limitations, real or apparent, of its social value. And, finally, even in the highest moral stages there remain certain limitations. Just because the rule can be so absolutely expressed, it gives rise to various casuistical problems when applied to the varying facts of life. Exceptions are recognised, and these exceptions still obey the general rule of conformity to the conditions of social welfare. Such, for example, are the familiar cases of telling the whereabouts of his victim to a murderer, telling patients in certain cases of their true condition of health, and revealing secrets which it is thought right to preserve, even when lying alone can preserve them. These are generally cases in which the internal diverges from the external law, and, however rare, are therefore worth notice. The rule, 'Lie not,' is the external rule, and corresponds approximately to the internal rule, 'Be trustworthy.' Cases occur where the rules diverge, and in such cases it is the internal rule which is morally approved. Truthfulness is the rule because in the vast majority of cases we trust a man in so far as he speaks the truth; in the exceptional cases, the mutual confidence would be violated when the truth, not when the lie, is spoken. In such cases, therefore, the moral law admits of an apparent exception, though there are many difficulties upon which I must touch hereafter in the way of defining them.

34. Now, without going farther at present, we see that truthfulness is a fresh exemplification of the principles already laid down; for truthfulness, so far as it is a virtue, implies

trustworthiness. Trustworthiness, again, is clearly a quality the development of which is essential to all such social growth, at least, as we can conceive to exist. It is an essential, and the most obviously essential, condition of social development. The growth of a sentiment of mutual confidence is so clearly necessary that it seems to have been virtually regarded by theorists who dealt in social contracts and so forth as the essential element or ultimate basis of morality. The development, however, of the sentiment implies a correlative development of the whole nature of men and society—a development so slow as to be very inadequately realised even in the highest societies or existence, and generally limited by very incomplete confidence between the members of different classes. So far from implying any suppression of passions or of the emotions as such, it implies the cultivation of all the qualities by which society is held together, so that the man who is trustworthy in the highest sense, who has in all cases a self-respect which makes it impossible for him to lie, is the final outcome, the ripest fruit, of the healthiest social conditions. Nothing is rarer, even in the best societies, than an exquisite sensitiveness upon such points, and a morbid social condition which implies a defect of the true social sentiment is marked by nothing more clearly than the existence of partial codes of truthfulness and the small importance attributed to lying between different classes. But this is to say nothing else than that truthfulness or trustworthiness is one of the essential qualities of the true social type, only to be generated, and indeed only to be fully appreciated, as the result of a long elaboration and a slow growth of harmonious relations. It implies, doubtless, though it is not necessarily implied by, the narrower quality which rather belongs to the prudential qualities of a hatred for error. The man, indeed, who hates error will generally hate falsehood.

> 'To thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the day the night,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.'

This kind of virtue would belong, however, in the highest degree to the man who approximates as closely as possible to

the calculating machine. Such a man no doubt would have what may be called a purely intellectual love of truth; but of truth as opposed to error or equivalent to accurate knowledge, not of truth as implied by trustworthiness. He would be like the calculating machine, equally at the service of the rogue or the honest man, unless he had also the social qualities summed up by a high sense of honour. It would give him no pain to know that he had deceived others, so long as his knowledge of their error was accurate. To know is to avoid error; a desire for knowledge and a love of being deceived are doubtless incompatible; and the man who felt the desire would be self-contradictory if he did not desire to be 'true to himself' in the sense of thinking and observing accurately. But he might be as great a liar as any one, as willing, that is, to use knowledge selfishly, unless we suppose that he also possesses the qualities implied in the social type. And therefore we may assume here, as before, that the moral law means simply a statement of the conduct characteristic of the most vigorous vitality.

### V. *The Social Virtues*

35. We come, in the last place, to the directly social virtues. It needs no demonstration that the existence of a society and its maintenance at a certain stage of civilisation are dependent upon the instincts which, whatever their ultimate nature, imply the readiness of the individual to identify himself with his fellows, and to seek his own happiness in or through their happiness. The question is not whether such qualities are virtuous, but whether they are not the sole virtues. Accordingly, some moralists hold benevolence to be the single virtue, as others deduce all the moral principles from prudence, or purity, or truthfulness. It is equally clear, again, that these virtues, like the others, are developed through a gradual process of generalisation; that so long as each tribe is an independent whole, the mutual good will of its members is often limited to the little section which represents the whole world for them, and that even in highly developed communities the limitations of benevolence are such as to show little

recognition of external claims. The gradual extension of the sphere of morality may be due to the generalising faculty itself—to any process by which the understanding becomes enlightened and the sympathies more sensitive, or it may be the indirect result of such a change in external conditions as is implied by the absorption of many communities into a larger whole, with a consequent recognition of a wider community of interest. We are still very far from an unqualified recognition of the virtue. Patriotism often takes the narrow and contemptible form of a desire for the extension of our own political organisation, in complete indifference to, or rather with a contemptuous refusal to attach any importance to, the welfare of the outside world. I will only observe, without dwelling farther upon sufficiently obvious considerations, that the change may be regarded in two aspects. The difference between the morality of military savages and that of a civilised country is not necessarily so great as it seems. The actual rule of conduct may be, in one case, to knock a stranger on the head, and, in the other, to ask him to dinner. But then it must be admitted that the difference may correspond simply to a difference in the facts to which the rule applies, not in the rule itself. Stranger, in one sense, means a being who will presumably kill me if he can; in the other, a being who will presumably be friendly. Thus the most civilised being would have to go armed in a region where no mutual understanding had been reached. The difference would be that he would there anticipate from every one the behaviour which in his own country he would only anticipate from an exceptional person. Unless his morality forbade self-defence —which is hardly the case in any accepted code—it would therefore allow or prescribe hostility towards strangers presumably hostile. Thus the growth of morality implies the development of this mutual understanding. It may be obvious that such an understanding would be useful if attainable, and so far its establishment does not imply a change in the moral sentiment, but only in the facts to which it is applied. On the other hand, it may also be said that, to attain the understanding, we require not simply a perception of its utility, but

a greater development of emotional sensibility, and so a greater power of sympathy, which must go along with the purely intellectual process.

36. This remark suggests one other which must be taken into account. The virtues of which I am speaking are often regarded as falling under the two heads of justice and benevolence. These two are sometimes described as so far from coincident that they may occasionally come into conflict, and morality is to prescribe a course which is a kind of diagonal between the two diverging rules. The justice of the Supreme Being, we are told, is tempered by his mercy, and *vice versâ*. It is plain that the distinction corresponds to that already drawn between the intellect and the emotions. Temperance, so far as it is strictly virtuous rather than prudential, implies, as I have said, a restriction upon selfishness, and the instincts by which the society is held together may be regarded as a development from the sexual and parental instincts. Truthfulness, on the other hand, so far as it too is strictly virtuous, must be regarded as implying a distinctively social quality, and so far a fitness to act in accordance with social demands. Thus we may regard temperance as included in the duty of benevolence, though it has also a prudential aspect; and truthfulness, with the same limitation, as included under the virtue of justice. And hence, again, it must be repeated that, although there may be a distinction, there can be no proper opposition. If benevolence means a desire to see others happy, it defeats its own end if it tries to promote the happiness of some at the expense of others; and justice ceases to be just when it implies the observance of a rule imposed for the good of all in such a way as to be injurious to all.

37. It seems desirable, however, to put this rather more precisely. What, in fact, is meant by justice? The special case in regard to which the virtue first emerges is that of a partial judge, and the same principle will apply of course to all other persons intrusted with power by the organisation of the community. The judge, again, is unjust so far as he acts from any other considerations than those which are recognised as legitimate by the legal constitution. He has to declare

the law, and to apply it to particular cases without fear or favour. He must therefore give the same decision whether the persons interested be friends or foes, relations or strangers, rich or poor. And so, extending the same principle, we say that a minister is unjust who distributes offices from other considerations than the fitness of the applicants, except in certain cases where it is understood that the power of appointment is an indirect mode of rewarding the appointer. A parent is unjust who does not distribute his property to his children equally, whether they are clever or stupid, and even, within wide limits, whether good or bad. And, on the other hand, considerations which are held to be irrelevant in one case are regarded as essentially relevant in another. The man is unjust who, in his judicial capacity, distinguishes between a friend and an enemy, a relation and a stranger; he is equally unjust if, in his domestic capacity, he fails to distinguish. It would be grossly unjust in a judge to favour a Tory as against a Whig; in a minister, it might be grossly unjust not to consider the claims of party. The judge would be unjust who showed favour to his own son, and the parent would be unjust who did not give his money to his own children. The essence of justice, therefore, seems to be the uniform application of rules according to relevant circumstances; or, as we may put it, it is an application to conduct of the principle of sufficient reason. Every difference in my treatment of others must be determined by some principle which is in that case appropriate and sufficient. In this sense, therefore, justice means reasonableness.

38. From this, again, we see in what way justice is implied in social development. How are we to say what, in any case, is the sufficient reason? What set of rules is relevant, and in what relations of life are we or are we not to attend to particular kinds of claims? To this we must reply, in general terms, that all social development implies, as we have seen, a distribution of functions, and the possibility of any permanent organisation depends upon a corresponding perception of the implied duties. The royal power, for example, has been developed by certain social needs, such as the necessity of a

centralised military power. If a particular king uses the power not so as to discharge his function in the most efficient way, but for some other purpose, such as the gratification of his appetites, the social organ ceases to be efficient, and the society is so far in a state of degeneration. The due performance of the function is suspended, and the organ becomes an encumbrance instead of a useful part of the system. The function of the criminal judge is the suppression of certain offences; if he only punishes criminals not related to him or receives bribes, and even if, as a judge, he gives undue weight to qualities which in another capacity he might properly regard, the administration of justice is so far corrupted. The same principle of course applies in every conceivable case, and is analogous to the statement that in a living organism the welfare of the animal depends upon his eyes seeing and his ears hearing according to certain rules. So far as the king is a tyrant or the judge corrupt, each is hindering the due performance of an important function, and injures the country as the distorting eye or ear injures the organism.

39. Hence, when we say that a judge is to be passionless, we use the word in the same sense as in the case of truthfulness. He must be inaccessible to certain passions when they are out of place; the ruling passion which must govern him in his judicial capacity is the passion for justice; and that, as before, whether acting justly has become a habit or is prompted by a constant sense of the vital importance of judicial impartiality to society in general. He should apply the rule with the precision of a calculating machine; but he must have a motive for setting his intellect to work impartially; and, of course, such motives are sufficiently numerous and powerful in a healthy social state to make judicial purity a second nature. When, again, we speak of mercy as conflicting with justice, we mean generally to imply that either the benevolence is ill-guided, or that a rule founded upon some important considerations is being applied in cases when an exception should be made. Benevolence conflicts with justice in the case of misguided charity or excessive leniency, where the desire of giving pleasure to some one immediately before

us causes us to overlook the indirect consequences of demoralisation, and so forth, to the person benefited, and the injury done to others who have equal claims, but who do not happen to be in so conspicuous a station. There is a conflict, again, when a rule is pedantically applied, so as to injure a man whose conduct is forbidden because it belongs to a class generally mischievous, though we are quite certain that in the particular case it had not the objectionable characteristics of that class; as, for example, if a man is punished for homicide in a case where homicide was evidently committed in self-defence. But in all such cases it is not properly a conflict between justice and benevolence, but between a benevolence which takes into account all the relevant circumstances, and one which fails to do so; between a justice which applies a rule with, and one which applies it without due consideration. There are, of course, many casuistical cases which may be suggested, and which often present real difficulty—cases, for example, such as have afforded materials for the most striking tragical situations, where a man is distracted between demands made upon him in two capacities—between the claims of his family, for example, and the claims of the state, as in the story of Brutus and his sons. Of such cases it is enough here to say that, on whatever principles they may be settled, they do not involve any proper conflict between benevolence and justice. The same criterion is ultimately implied in both cases, though we may lay more stress upon one or other aspect. The command, 'Be benevolent,' carries with it the condition that your benevolence should be regulated by reason, and therefore should not benefit one man at the expense of the society. The command, 'Be just,' carries with it in the same way the condition that, whatever function you are discharging or in whatever capacity you are acting, you must be animated by public spirit, that is, by motives coincident with the dictates of a reasonable benevolence; and thus, in any case, the conclusion is that the moral law prescribes a type of character which includes amongst its manifestations a desire to discharge all the social functions, and which therefore implies fitness to form part of a sound social state.

## VI. *The Social Definition of Virtue*

40. This brief survey of the main divisions of morality, which, as I have shown, run into each other, and to some extent mutually imply each other, may justify the conclusion as to the social definition of virtue. Society, I have said, may be considered as an organism, implying what I have called a social tissue, modified in various ways so as to form the organs adapted to various specific purposes. The existence of the social tissue at any stage of development, and its power of maintaining itself, either as a part of the special order or as against other societies, depends essentially upon the fulfilment of certain conditions. Since the qualities by which societies differ do not depend upon the innate qualities of its constituent members, which remain constant (or approximately constant) through long periods of social development, but upon these qualities as modified and developed by means of the social factors, it follows again that the society grows on condition of impressing a certain character upon its members. This takes place in the earlier stages by the development of a social sentiment unfavourable to certain specific modes of conduct. As the society becomes more reasonable, more capable of understanding and applying general principles, the sentiment develops into an approval of a certain type of character, the existence of which fits the individual for membership of a thoroughly efficient and healthy social tissue. To state the main qualities thus impressed is to lay down what I have called the 'law of nature.' This, as we see, has the two poles of prudence and virtue, corresponding to the distinction of the qualities which are primarily useful to the individual and those which are primarily useful to the society. Thus, whatever strengthens the individual, increases his courage, energy, industry, and so forth, must, other things being equal, strengthen the society. Hence the law of prudence, which corresponds rather to a precedent condition of morality than to morality itself. Then the individual is stronger and the society is stronger so far as his passions are regulated in a certain way, and including alike the passions which have a

direct bearing upon the individual life and those which have a direct bearing upon the social bond; whence the virtues of temperance and chastity. Thirdly, the individual, so far as reasonable, must avoid error on his own account, and must avoid the propagation of error for the welfare of the society, whence the virtues of wisdom and trustworthiness. And, finally, since the social union implies a direct interest of the individual in the welfare of the society, we have the directly social virtues, which imply at once benevolence and justice, according as we attend to the motive or to the regulated action of motives. And these four classes of excellence, which by the mode of development are necessarily reconcilable and mutually implicatory of each other, seem to constitute all that is meant by the general moral law, though admitting, of course, an indefinite variety of special applications.

41. Briefly, then, we may say that morality is a statement of the conditions of social welfare; and morality, as distinguished from prudence, refers to those conditions which imply a direct action upon the social union. In other words, morality is the sum of the preservative instincts of a society, and presumably of those which imply a desire for the good of the society itself. And so far, as I may observe, moralists would generally agree as to the fact, however differently they might state it or account for it. That is to say, no moralist of any school would deny that the health of the society, its power of persistence, and its harmony with the happiness of its members, depends essentially and primarily upon its condition in respect of morality and prudence. Lower the average standard, and the society is so far in danger of stagnation, decay, and actual extermination; raise it, and the society is so far better calculated to preserve itself and to develop new and richer life. But difficulties and disputes arise when we go farther. That which I am specially concerned to meet concerns the mode in which virtue, the nature of which can be clearly and simply expressed when we speak of the social organism, presents itself when we change our point of view, and ask how it comes to be impressed upon the individual. Virtue is a condition of social welfare; but why should I be

virtuous, or what are the motives by which the conformity of the individual is or may be secured? In order to answer this, and the many problems which arise from or are intimately connected with it, it is necessary to consider what may be called the 'theory of obligation.' This, accordingly, will form the topic of the next three chapters. What is the quality in respect of which the individual is susceptible to the social pressure? What is the form taken by that pressure? What is the nature of the character which must be impressed upon the individual? These are the problems of altruism, of merit, and of conscience, upon each of which I shall have something to say.

## CHAPTER VI

### ALTRUISM

### I. *Egoistic Instincts*

1. The last chapter has brought us to the problem which is at the root of all ethical discussion. The definition of morality is perfectly simple so long as we fix our attention upon the social organism; the moral law is a statement of certain essential conditions of the vitality of the society, and specifically of those conditions which apply primarily to the society, and only in a secondary sense to the individual. The individual then must, so far as moral, be capable of aiming at the social welfare before his own. In every moral system, action for the good of others is regarded as virtuous, if not as the only action entitled to be called virtuous. But how is such action conceivable? Can any man really sacrifice himself? Is not the admission of the possibility of self-sacrifice inconsistent with the assertion that all conduct is determined by the feelings of the agent, and therefore, as it would seem, by his own pain or pleasure? The egoistical theory which accepts this conclusion is the favourite bugbear of ethical writers. By fixing upon an antagonist the imputation of egoism you give him a bad name, and have an easy opportunity for a rhetoric which reflects credit upon the assailant. Only a cynic or a satirist here and there maintains the thesis of universal selfishness, or a rare philosopher propounds it in words, whilst carefully explaining that he does not mean what he says. I am half ashamed to join in the hue and cry against an outcast doctrine so often repudiated, and so often pronounced to have been slain outright. Yet its singular vitality, in spite of repeated assaults, shows it to possess some real plausibility.

If it be erroneous, we must be careful in laying down the positions of which it is a perverted statement; and as even the egoist admits that altruism, though a mere mask, is yet a mask invariably adopted by the virtuous, it is equally necessary, upon his assumption, to examine its true nature, though at the expense of painfully retracing some familiar ground.

2. Where does the puzzle arise? Common-sense finds no difficulty. A man is altruistic who loves his neighbour as himself; who gives money to the poor which he might have spent in luxury; who leaves house and home to convert savages; who sacrifices health to comfort prisoners or sufferers in a plague-stricken city. Sir Philip Sidney was altruistic when he gave the cup of water to the wounded soldier instead of slaking his own dying thirst. Such deeds make our nerves tingle at the hearing, and ennoble the dreary wastes of folly and selfishness recorded in history. But the egoist has an easy explanation. Sidney's conduct only proves that his vanity was stronger than his thirst, and vanity is one of the meanest of motives; the charitable man is repaid by a glow of self-complacency; the missionary hopes for a reward in heaven; the physician in the plague-stricken city is eager for praise and shrinks from general contempt. In all cases, and however skilfully disguised, some personal gratification supplies the cogent motive. Everywhere we find the conviction, tacit or express, that the conduct adopted will secure the greatest happiness of the agent. Nobody, indeed, can deny that men act so as to destroy their own happiness; if vanity causes a man to sacrifice his best chances, so may the desire of a brief sensual pleasure. One man goes to a public-house, another leads a forlorn hope; each throws away life for a brief enjoyment, whether mischievous or beneficial to others. The egoist may explain both cases with equal facility. Each act implies a temporary error of judgment; the love of gin or the love of glory overpowers the reflective faculties. Let a man call up all the consequences of his action, and he will cease to be imprudent, and therefore to throw away his chances of future happiness, whether his happiness is bound up with or absolutely irreconcilable with the happiness of others. A

man may conceivably be unselfish, but so far as really unselfish he is a fool for his pains. He will only do good to others, if a wise or a thoroughly enlightened man, so far as he expects to derive some benefit for himself. Thus the statement that altruism is impossible does not mean that it is impossible in fact, but only in deliberate intention. No man, it is argued, can sacrifice himself knowingly and intentionally.

3. To unravel these arguments as well as I can, I must begin by recalling some considerations already noticed. All conduct has an indefinite series of consequences; that is to say, any act may be taken as the starting-point of a series of events continuing for an indefinite period, all of which would be different had the action been different. The agent can of course contemplate only a small part of these consequences. It is his intention to produce those events which he sees to be dependent upon his actions, and from the intention we may infer the motive—that is, the feeling which is gratified by the realisation of the intention. Now conduct may be beneficial to others without any benevolent intention, and not only by accident, but from its intrinsic nature. This, for example, is true of the sexual and parental instincts of animals. The instinct which leads a stag to form a harem and propagate his race is of essential utility to the herd, but does not imply that the stag has the least sympathy for the hinds or their fawns. The hen sacrifices herself for her chicken, but it does not follow—perhaps it is only our anthropomorphic tendencies which suggest the inference—that she considers her chickens as anything more than soft, warm lumps of down, which are comfortable furniture in the nest. She sacrifices herself to save them, it may be, just as she would run into equal risk if tempted by a particular kind of food. The apparent love may be (one hopes that it is not) simply a physical appetite.

4. It is, then, unsafe to infer altruistic intentions from altruistic consequences. In human beings the sexual appetite appears to be the most purely selfish of impulses, in so far as it prompts to conduct often ruinous to its objects. On the other hand, it is at the root of all the social virtues. The passion cannot be gratified without important consequences to

others, and yet in its lower form implies no recognition whatever of those consequences. The purely sensual appetite remains in the reasonable being who can recognise the consequences to others. If he still gratifies the passion without reference to those consequences, he is prompted to the grossest selfishness; if, on the other hand, the sensual impulse is so regulated that others are not injured by its gratification, it may become the nucleus of the most unselfish affection. Before the agent is enlightened by reflection it is hardly proper to call him either selfish or unselfish; he does not repudiate the claims of his fellows—he is incapable of perceiving their existence. Selfishness or unselfishness is developed as the intellect becomes capable of contemplating the happiness of others besides the agent. The same change is manifest in other relations. The master of slaves may regard them simply as convenient instruments; he may risk life and limb to defend them, as he would run the same risk in defence of inanimate property. So far as his interest is furthered by their health and safety, his relation to them may have beneficial consequences although there is no benevolent intention; but so far as he can increase his own comfort by giving them pain, he may be as willing to inflict pain as to give pleasure. He might, for anything we can see, be as willing to feed his pigs on slaves as to feed his slaves upon pork, if the price of the two commodities should vary. In this case the relation remains purely external; the slaves are considered simply as things, not as human beings. But where external circumstances enforce a certain identity of interest upon a particular group, there is room for the development of genuine altruism. The mother may be stimulated to actions which are *de facto* beneficent and self-sacrificing in their consequences by the pleasant sensations connected with suckling and nursing; as soon as she becomes aware that she is furthering the happiness of her offspring, the happiness may itself become a motive for conduct. There is already a framework provided within which the affections have room to expand. The purely sensual pleasure is now so blended with the pleasure derived from a perception of the happiness conferred that it

may be impossible to discriminate between them. In the normal case they operate in the same direction, and there is no conflict so long as they do not dictate diverging lines of conduct. The same change (as I have already argued) takes place in regard to social relations generally. The connection between husband and wife, which implied originally the subordination of one being to the sensual appetites of the other, becomes the ground of the most perfect sympathy and the strongest mutual affection. A slave-holding community may develop into one in which the employer and the employed have friendly domestic relations, and each desires, or at least respects, the pleasure of the other; and the point at which this becomes possible must be at that stage of intellectual development in which we are able to recognise the happiness of others than ourselves. Till that is possible, each being can be at most the instrument of the other's pleasure, and regarded with feelings not differing in kind from those excited by any lifeless object. So soon as we realise the fact that we cause pain and pleasure to others, their pain or pleasure may supply a motive. Till that period, the agent is not so much selfish or unselfish in the full sense as incapable of any feeling in the matter. There must already be beneficent conduct, but there can be no benevolent or malevolent intention.

5. This change is sometimes explained as a product of association. The truth or falsehood of this doctrine in general depends upon principles which lie beyond the present inquiry; but it may be observed already that there is at least a *prima facie* objection to the completeness of the explanation. The simple association of a particular object, material or animated, with certain pleasures, may doubtless make us value it as a useful instrument, but we do not see how it can change the instrument to an object of sympathy. The child may regard its mother as a fountain of agreeable drink, and the mother may regard the child as affording a pleasant relief; but so far there is nothing in the association which should lead the child to distinguish between the mother and the bottle, or the mother to distinguish between the child and some mechanical contrivance, except in so far as one may be more efficient than

the other. Undoubtedly, the pleasant association prepares the way for the higher sentiment. The fact of the mutual convenience provides a necessary condition for satisfaction in conferring mutual pleasure. But the condition is obviously insufficient, for it suggests no account of the distinction which arises between the sentiment excited by a mother or that excited by a comfortable garment. It might happen that, by throwing away broken meat which was a nuisance to me, I was contributing to the support of a poor family or to the support of the crows. So long as I regard both simply as conveniences for the removal of my refuse, I shall simply prefer one or the other as it discharges that function most efficiently. If I am better pleased to benefit the poor family than the crows, whilst the conduct in other respects produces the same effect upon me, I am so far 'altruistic'; and this implies that I am capable of sympathising with, and therefore of at least recognising, the happiness conferred upon the human beings. The bare convenience to me, being by hypothesis the same, would not lead to any distinction by mere force of association.

6. I assume, then, that altruism, whatever its meaning or analysis, begins at the point at which I am capable of benevolent intentions; or, in other words, where conferring pleasure upon others becomes a possible motive. And here the egoist meets us by denying that this can ever be an ultimate motive. The desire to give happiness is always capable of a further analysis, which shows it to include a desire of happiness for ourselves. Nobody denies that the wish to give happiness may be part of my motive, and it may be at a given moment the only part of which I am distinctly conscious. I till a field in order that I may reap the harvest, but whilst I am tilling I may be thinking only of the plough; the means become a temporary or conditional end. So I may be kind to you in order that you may hereafter be kind to me, and at a given instant of kindness I may not be distinctly conscious of the ultimate end. But, according to the egoist, such an end must always exist. The goal of every conceivable desire is some state of agreeable consciousness of my own. I may not look

to the end of the vista of intended consequences, but, if I look, I shall always see my own reflection. This, again, is taken to be a self-evident truth. To suppose genuine altruism, that is, a desire of which the ultimate end is the happiness of some other person, is to suppose a contradiction.

7. This statement appears to me to convey a palpable truth or a great error according to our mode of interpreting it. Every motive, as I have already said, may be described either in objective or subjective language. I may either state the external conditions of gratifying my desire or the desire which is gratified. It is almost the same thing to say that I desire food or that I am hungry, and it depends upon the particular circumstances whether it is more convenient to use one or the other form of expression. Though 'almost,' indeed, it is not quite the same thing, for the reason that the external condition never corresponds absolutely to the internal state. A given desire may be gratified in various ways, and, again, a given set of conditions may gratify various desires. The statement that I want a fire expresses something more and also something less than the statement that I want to be warmed; for I may want a fire in order to cook my dinner, and I may preserve warmth by putting on a greatcoat. Hence it may not be simply tautologous to say, 'I want a fire *because* I want to be warmed,' for the statement specifies the particular relation out of several possible relations in which a fire is desirable; though it would be tautologous to say, 'I want the conditions of warmth *because* I want to be warmed.' I may, indeed, give a reasonable meaning even to this latter statement, if the question be whether the immediate cause of the desire be a change in the external or the internal conditions. I may, for example, have a desire to take food because I am hungry, or be hungry because the food stimulates my appetite. It may be said that in the first case the desire is an independent cause, as it arises from organic changes which take place independently of the external changes, whilst in the other case the desire itself arises from those changes. I may ask how it comes to pass that I have certain feelings, in which case I may of course trace back the series of events as far as I

please, and call any one 'the cause,' which being altered, the subsequent events would be altered; but at the time of action the desire itself, to whatever it may be due, must be the cause of conduct.

8. Now the assertion that there is both a subjective and an objective condition of conduct tells us nothing whatever as to the nature of the objective conditions of gratification. We gain nothing by changing from one mode of statement to the other. It is idle to say that I want a thing because I want a thing, or to modify statements by emphasising in one case the want and in the other the thing, or, again, by laying a special stress upon the 'I.' Of course my conduct, whatever it is, must be conditioned by my desire; but the objective condition may be anything which can affect my desire. There is, therefore, no *prima facie* objection to the hypothesis that these objective conditions may include the happiness of others. There is no more reason for denying that we may receive pleasure from the pleasure of another man than for doubting that we may receive it from the combustion of coal. The only condition which we have so far assumed is the obvious one that I can only desire that which has some relation to me, for this is doubtless implied in saying that I desire it. A desire for warmth, for example, could not prompt a desire for such a change in the atmospheric conditions as would not affect my bodily organisation. The desire could not be gratified by a change in the temperature of Sirius or a fire in a desert island, for that would be to desire a warmth which did not warm. In short, I must not so state the objective conditions as to suppose that I can desire them when they necessarily part company with the subjective condition. To say that I desire something is to say that the something has an influence upon me, since it has an influence upon my happiness; and this condition must be noticed, because, for the reasons already noticed, the objective statement generally is too wide, and includes other conditions besides those which gratify my desires.

9. Hence we reach the problem which has to be considered. Conduct, I have said, is determined by feeling, or, in other

words, by happiness and unhappiness. My happiness, again, depends at every moment upon my relation to the external world, and this external world is constituted partly of things which I assume to possess, and partly of things which I do not assume to possess a consciousness analogous to my own. I may or may not take into account this external consciousness. I may regard an oyster, as I regard a peach, simply as a toothsome morsel, or I may suppose him to have a certain capacity for pain or pleasure. I may regard my fellow-men in either of these ways—as parts of a mechanism or as sentient organisms. It may happen that, in the former case, the conditions of my happiness are identical with the conditions of yours. I may be unable to get my own dinner without by the same action getting a dinner for you. If so, there is, we may say, an external identity of interest, and my conduct may be beneficial to you without implying the existence in me of any desire for your happiness as such. If, however, the knowledge of your happiness has an essential and unconditional tendency to promote my happiness, the case is so far altered. I shall then make a distinction between cases which previously appeared to be identical. I shall not hold it to be the same thing whether I walk up a ladder of wood or a ladder of sentient bodies. There is, as I have said, no *a priori* objection to the hypothesis that one kind of feeling may be as real as the other; that the object of desire may include the feelings of others, as well as changes in external objects which do not involve feeling. But there is the difference that the former kind of feeling admits of some further analysis in a sense not possible in the other case, though not, as I think, in the sense supposed by the egoist. Given the feeling of hunger, for example, I can go no further in the subjective analysis, though I may assign the correlative physiological processes. It exists as an ultimate fact, and so gives the only sufficient explanation of my conduct. But if I sympathise with your hunger, there is another process implied, of which it may be possible to give some account. I suffer because you suffer; and he may fairly be asked whether this fact can be made more intelligible or the conditions of its occurrence explained more precisely. Having

done what we can in that direction, we may be able to return to the original problem.

## II. *Sympathy*

10. Now, in the first place, the recognition that there are other centres of consciousness besides my own is bound up in the closest way with the recognition of what is called an objective world. A thing is held to be objective—in one sense, at least, of a most ambiguous word—when I hold that it is perceptible by you as well as by me, and subjective when I hold that it is perceptible by me alone. I do not assert or deny that this is the sole meaning ; but at least, in asserting the objective existence of anything, I assert it to exist for others as well as for me. The statement is bound up in the process by which my world is constituted. It is the power of so regarding the world which gives it, if I may say so, a stereoscopic solidity. Each person sees only one aspect of surrounding realities. He holds it to be real in so far as he holds that other aspects are visible to his neighbours. The actual sensations of every moment are completed and held together in the mind by a whole system of ideal perceptions more or less distinctly present in actual consciousness. The room in which I sit is part of the house, the house of the city, and so forth ; and such statements summon into comparative vividness a set of perceptions not actually present at the moment, but present to others, and which would be present to me if I changed my position.

11. To think of anything as real is to call up a system of such ideal perceptions. It is to rehearse a set of sensations which are somehow (the 'how' is a problem of metaphysics) regarded as representative of others not actually present. If I have to do with simple relations of time and space, no assignable emotion is produced. I complete my picture of the exterior of my room by imagining what I should see from outside, and so I may build up a picture of the whole world. But the world is interesting to me so far as it is the dwelling-place of myself and of beings analogous to myself. The man as directly revealed by my senses is simply an object of certain colours and dimensions, but the relations in which he

is really interesting to me are those in which he is moved by passions like my own. I do not really think of a man till I have interpreted the external signs by the emotions which they signify. Till I do that, he is for me merely a coloured and moving statue. I know not whether he will be a friend or an enemy, one who will save or destroy my life. To complete the picture I must therefore represent his feelings. I must put myself in his place, feel what he feels, and measure his conduct by the analogy of my own behaviour under similar circumstances. The process is the same which is implied in every intellectual process. I imagine a state of consciousness not actually present, and besides imagining mere sensations and perceptions of mechanical relations, I imagine a set of emotions and reasoning processes analogous to my own. I complete my picture of the house by putting myself outside in imagination; I add the imagined feelings of standing in the rain and cold, and, in virtue of some intellectual process not here to be discussed, I take those feelings to be representative of those of the beggar at my door. Till I have rehearsed those feelings I am not really thinking of the beggar, but only of a lay-figure of certain dimensions and colours. Through this mental operation alone is that knowledge of the external world conceivable which is yet necessary to give coherence to our own series of sensations or to frame them into anything that can properly be called knowledge.

12. Hence it would appear that sympathy is not an additional instinct, a faculty which is added when the mind has reached a certain stage of development, a mere incident of intellectual growth, but something implied from the first in the very structure of knowledge. I must be capable of representative ideas in order to think coherently or to draw the essential distinction between object and subject. I must be able to regard certain modes of thought and feeling as symbolic of modes present in other minds, and to my own in other positions. To realise the world as a material whole I must have representative perceptions of time and space. To realise the world of thought and feeling, that world upon which my life and happiness depend at every instant, I must have representa-

tive emotions. 'Put yourself in his place' is not merely a moral precept; it is a logical rule implied in the earliest germs of reason or a description of reasoning itself, so far as it deals with other sentient beings. To know that a man has certain feelings is to have representative feelings, not equal in intensity, but identical in kind. Sympathy and reason have so far an identical factor—each implies the other. I cannot reason about another man except in so far as I can rehearse his motives; I cannot feel for him except in so far as I can regard my feelings as representative. The two processes are mutually involved, and, whatever difficulties may be suggested, it seems clear that I cannot properly know what another man feels without in some degree feeling what he feels.

13. Although I must take for granted the metaphysical implications of this statement, whatever they may be, I must dwell for a moment upon certain difficulties which obscure it even from the scientific point of view. The mechanism of language tends to introduce certain perplexities; for it is, as I have said, one main use of language that it enables us to reason by symbols without calling into distinct consciousness all the feelings which are symbolised. The arithmetician performs his processes without evoking a distinct vision of the numbers with which he deals, or recalling the primary intuitions which satisfied him of the truth of his rules. We say 'men' without attempting to call up more than a very small part of all the thoughts which may at different times be suggested by the word. I may say, 'My servant is ill, therefore I will give him a holiday,' and may act accordingly, though a very faint image of illness, holidays, or servants presents itself to my mind. When I say that a man has been hanged, the expression is thus liable to many ambiguities. It may suggest to me simply that a figure of a certain weight and shape has been suspended in a certain way. It may call up merely certain affections of the senses of sight and touch; or, again, it may suggest certain visible signs of vital processes, struggling limbs, the gradual cessation of motion, and the conversion of a moving and coherent into a motionless and decaying body; or it may further suggest the painful sensations,

the despair, horror, and remorse which I suppose the man to have felt. I may stop at the external signs, and I may pass beyond them to the emotions signified. And thus the same words may call up the mental images which would be generated in the most and in the least sympathetic witness, and serve equally to suggest certain mechanical relations as to stimulate the deepest and most complex emotions. When, therefore, I say that knowledge implies sympathy, I of course do not mean to deny that we may have a knowledge of the external fact, which is, for many purposes, all the knowledge actually present to our minds, and which implies no sympathy at all. I need not go beyond the feelings which would be called up by hanging a dead body, even when I am said to know that a man has been put to death by hanging. In every case a large part of the possible emotion remains unrealised.

14. It is more important, perhaps, to remark that I do not profess to give a complete account of the process. Undoubtedly it must be held that the knowledge of the feeling is something different from a simple rehearsal of the feeling. The representative feeling may differ not only in intensity but also in quality from that which it represents. The knowledge that another man is suffering gives rise to complex or varying emotions. Nothing, of course, is more common than to find that men take pleasure in humiliating and mortifying their neighbours. The critic rejoices in tormenting a sensitive poet; the child delights in teasing his playfellows and his animals; and it is an undeniable though a hideous fact that there is such a thing as a voluptuous pleasure in cruelty. Milton's 'lust hard by hate' expresses a profound psychological truth. And such facts demand a brief consideration in order to show that they are not inconsistent with the theory just stated. They are rather, as I think, examples of the danger which besets any one who tries to translate emotional laws into logic, and to pronounce any variety of human character impossible because it seems to involve an implicit contradiction.

15. Much cruelty, in the first place, means simple insensibility. The defect of sympathy is also an intellectual defect. The child tormenting an insect or the savage abandoning his

infant is simply not capable (in the common phrase) of entering into the feelings of his victim. The child is amused by the spinning of the cockchafer as he is by the spinning of a top; it is simply a curious bit of mechanism. The savage may throw away a baby when its cries are tiresome because he does not think of its sufferings at all. Cruelty of this kind is therefore nothing but intellectual torpor, an incapacity for projecting oneself into the circumstances of others, and therefore inability even to think about the most important set of conditions of the happiness of more developed beings. The dulness which incapacitates a boor for appreciating the feelings of the refined nature is so far a disqualification for all the more complex social activities. And so we may observe that as a society becomes more civilised, as the reasoning faculties become quicker and wider, and the power of observing many relations between living beings increases, there is an improvement in the virtue of humanity if in nothing else. To think about other beings is to stimulate our sympathies, and our sensibility is quickened—to the regret of some people—by the same power which implies intellectual progress. Men may be as licentious, and in some ways as selfish, in the most as in the least civilised countries, but they also become more reluctant to inflict pain, and open their ears to lamentations which were once interpreted as idle sound.

16. Pleasure, again, in the sufferings of an enemy suggests more complex considerations, but we may still distinguish between taking pleasure in pain simply as pain, and that in which pain is regarded as a necessary concomitant of some other circumstances. When a man's interests are opposed to my own, I wish for something which involves disappointment or vexation to him. Christians find pleasure in the knowledge that their countrymen have killed, mangled, and humiliated a large number of foreigners; but the pain may be imperfectly realised, or, if realised, realised as a drawback. The generous enemy becomes capable of the true chivalrous sentiment, and may desire a victory at the smallest possible cost to his enemy. The barbarous sentiment implied in a Roman triumph may have implied rather a want of the perception that other people

had feelings than a delight in their suffering; and in an age when sympathy is wider this delight becomes inexpressibly revolting. The most brutal John Bull would hardly have wished to expose Napoleon to insult as well as humiliation. It is simply reasonable in this sense to love one's enemies. I might wish to prove a rival controversialist to be a fool, because a conviction of his folly is necessary to my vanity, but I should be sorry to hear that my bitterest or most successful antagonist was suffering from a toothache. Antagonism, of course, reconciles us to the pain of our adversaries, and even allows the thought of that pain to be part of a pleasurable emotion. The sympathetic pang which it produces as represented by our imagination is swallowed up by a multitude of associated feelings. We desire, again, that a man should suffer when we feel that our security is dependent upon his suffering; and this sentiment enters for something into the moral desire of retribution. It is a part, at least, of that sentiment that the moral order would be out of joint if wrong-doing did not lead to pain. But this sentiment is compatible with, though it is not necessarily combined with, a horror of inflicting useless pain upon any one. Wherever the pain, that is, is not essential as a deterrent, we have so far less desire for its infliction. I should be heartily glad to know that the most detestable criminal had, by some accident, become insensible to the punishment which I think it right should be inflicted. I do not assert that this is a necessary or even the general feeling; but so far as we regard punishment as useful, that is, as having consequences productive of happiness to others, we do not desire pain in itself. Whatever other motives may be operative, this is one ingredient in the desire for justice, and even to some extent in the desire for vengeance; and, so far as it exists, we must admit that pain is only desired for extrinsic motives. It is not considered as a good thing in itself, but as part of the conditions of good to others than the sufferer.

17. Fresh complexities are introduced when we come to the enmity which implies not a mere antagonism of interests but a personal dislike to others. Sympathy, in the sense in which I am using the word, may give rise to antipathy. We

are led to detest a man's character because we can partly share his feelings. The saint and the sensualist can each enter into the motives of the other. The saint is still accessible to the brutal passions which it has been the labour of his life to master. It is the wild beast within him which he sees incarnated in another agent, and which awakes his horror and disgust. Conversely the sensualist may see in the saint the triumphant conscience which can still inflict pangs of remorse upon himself, though it cannot restrain his conduct. There are conflicting elements in the character of every man, and parts of ourselves which we regard with horror in memory, though under some special stimulus they may overpower all restraining motives. We can sympathise with other men, that is, realise their feelings in imagination, because their character contains the same primary instinct; and this sympathy gives rise to admiration or contempt as the consciousness of our own qualities gives rise to vanity or humiliation, when the action shows that the dominating motives differ in certain ways from those which, at the time of reflection, appear to us to be natural and becoming. We may thus come to regard a man as a mischievous agency in the world, as predestined by his very constitution, and not from mere accidents of circumstance, to thwart and humiliate us, and as embodying those sentiments which we detest the more heartily as we can realise them the more vividly. He is a nuisance to be abated, a corrupting or discordant element in the general system of things; and therefore we must take pleasure in conditions which necessarily involve his suffering or destruction.

18. I do not attempt to give any analysis of such cases. It is enough to say that in the complex mechanism of human motives we may often come to results which apparently conflict with the principles from which they are deduced. Even in such personal antipathies the sympathy is the fundamental fact. The hatred which is generated is always a more or less painful emotion, because our spontaneous sympathy leads in any case to some conflict of motives. We cannot hate the man without feeling that some of our own feelings are taking part against ourselves. And, further, the feeling of hatred is perfectly

compatible with an entire absence of anything like delight in pain. We may simply desire to keep the disagreeable person at a distance, to restrain his activity or divert it into a harmless channel, to convert him to better modes of feeling and so forth. It is only when we are so related that our satisfaction necessarily implies his misery that we are tempted actually to desire his suffering. The distinction between hating the sin and hating the sinner is often hypocritical enough, but it also expresses the rational conviction that all pain is in itself bad and painful to contemplate, though it may be inseparably connected with desirable results.

19. But it remains to be admitted that there is apparently such a thing as pleasure in the pain of others—pure malignity, which we call devilish, to mark that it is abnormal and significant of a perverted nature. The existence of such a feeling is a puzzle such as that which psychologists have discussed under the name of the 'luxury of grief.' Sentimentalists seem, at any rate, to delight in cultivating sorrow, which is apparently a still more contradictory state of mind than delight in the sufferings of others. The explanation, so far as it need be considered here, seems to depend upon the fact that there is a certain pleasure in almost every kind of excitement. We like what relieves the dulness of our lives and provides some channel for emotional discharge. The sluggish and brutal nature delights in the stimulus of horror; in spectacles of blood and death, even though it would appear at first sight that heightened excitement meant necessarily a heightening of disgust. Men apparently humane and sensitive have taken delight in executions. The Romans took pleasure in the sight of dying gladiators; Spaniards, in the sight of mangled bulls and horses; an English mob is fascinated by a sickening accident in the streets; and possibly we may trace a remnant of the same feeling in the pleasure given by the horrible in tragedies or by 'sensational' incidents in modern romance. We have, again, the more hideous cases in which cruelty seems to afford a kind of voluptuous delight, as in some historical monsters who made an art of torture. Almost any pungent sensation, though provocative of sheer disgust to the sensitive,

seems to yield a kind of pleasure to some natures. The problem must be left to the psychologist. It is enough here to say, first, that in all such cases the pain, whether original or reflected, is but one strand in a highly complex thread of feeling, and may produce its effect as a counter-irritant, or as heightening other sensations which are in alliance with it; and, secondly, that it is in any case a comparatively rare and abnormal phenomenon, due to some morbid condition of the faculties, or perhaps to the survival of ferocious instincts from times when the intellect and the sympathies were comparatively dormant. Sympathy is the natural and fundamental fact. Even the most brutal of mankind are generally sympathetic so far as to feel rather pain than pleasure at the sight of suffering. The scum of a civilised population gathered to pick pockets on a racecourse would be pained at the sight of a child in danger of being run over or being brutally assaulted by a ruffian, and would be disposed to rescue it, or at least to cheer a rescuer, unless their spontaneous emotion were overpowered by some extrinsic sentiment.

20. If this account of the sympathetic emotions be approximately accurate, we see that sympathy is implied in all thoughts about others. Though it generates antipathy and discord in numberless cases, the underlying and governing process is sympathetic. We may say that we think about other men by becoming other men. We appropriate provisionally their circumstances and emotions. Metaphysicians and mystics have expressed this by denying the ultimate validity of individuality, and by saying that in some transcendental sense a man is his neighbour, or that all men are manifestations of one indivisible substance. The language, though to my mind untenable, may serve to express the fact. So far as I sympathise with you I annex your consciousness. I act as though my nerves could somehow be made continuous with yours in such a way that a blow which fell upon your frame would convey a sensation to my brain. Undoubtedly we must add that this current, so transmitted, is greatly enfeebled in almost all cases. The reflex feeling is normally far less acute than the direct. The thought of the pains of starvation does not

produce a pain at all comparable to starvation itself. And as the represented object is distant in time and space, the sensibility becomes rapidly dulled. Most men have great difficulty in forming any vivid representation of distant suffering. The actual sight of a stranger in agony gives a keener feeling at the moment than the image of a brother dying at the antipodes; and the most benevolent of men hears with great composure of the destruction of millions in China. It may, on the other hand, be remarked, in passing, that the suffering of another person may stimulate a sympathetic person under certain conditions more forcibly than similar sufferings of his own. The image may incidentally set in motion a whole current of accumulated feeling. A man who has been watching the sick-bed of a wife may be more moved by an accident to her than by one to himself, not because the sight of her pain is keener than his own pain in itself, but because it fires a whole train of anxieties, hopes, and fears already prepared for explosion. So I may take enormous trouble to give a very slight pleasure to a man whom I like, not because I feel his pleasures more than my own, but because the desire to do him honour is so strong that I am glad to find any vent for it, however trifling in itself.

21. Finally, if this be the true account of the process, the difficulty is not to understand why the thought of your pain should give me pain, but to understand how it should ever give me pleasure. It is not more true that to think of a fire is to revive the sensations of warmth, than it is true that to think of a man is to revive the emotions and thought which we attribute to him. To think of him in any other sense is to think of the mere doll or statue, the outside framework, not of the organised mass of consciousness which determines all the relations in which he is most deeply interesting to us. The primary sympathy is of course modified in a thousand ways—by the ease or difficulty with which we can adopt his feelings; by the attractiveness or repulsiveness of the feelings revealed; by the degree in which circumstances force us into co-operation or antagonism; and by innumerable incidental associations which make it pleasant or painful to share his feelings.

If by sympathy we mean this power of vicarious emotion, it may give rise to antipathy, to hatred, rivalry, and jealousy, and even to the diabolical perversion of pleasure in others' pain ; but the direct and normal case is that in which sympathy leads to genuine altruism, or feeling in conformity with that which it reflects.

### III. *Altruism*

22. We may now return to the original problem, what is implied in unselfish or altruistic conduct? Sympathy, in the sense explained, is not identical with altruism, but it is the essential condition of altruism. I cannot be truly altruistic, that is, until the knowledge of another man's pain is painful to me. That is the groundwork of the more complex sentiments which are involved in all truly moral conduct, morality implying the existence of certain desires which have for their immediate object the happiness of others. I have tried to consider briefly the nature of this underlying sentiment. We have now to say precisely in what sense it leads to self-sacrifice; but we have still to get rid of certain ambiguities which perplex the discussion before giving the answer, which is in itself, as I hold, sufficiently clear.

23. How does altruistic conduct differ from that which is not altruistic? Obviously (if my theory be sound) it does not differ in any sense which would imply that my conduct can ever spring from anything but my own feelings. So far as my actions can be said to be determined by anything else, they are not properly my actions. I am in such cases part of the mechanism set in action by some external force, whether it be the will of another agent or some mechanical circumstance. My limbs are for the time part of another man's limbs. Voluntary action, or action determined by the motives of the agent, is the definition of what is strictly conduct. I may be prompted by pains and pleasures which represent those of another man, but they must not the less be my pains and pleasures. Hence we must exclude two alternative errors resulting from the neglect either of the objective or the subjective conditions of conduct, and therefore of the fact that

both must always be present. We may speak, for example, of a man as preferring the pleasure of another to his own. We must in such a case be understood to mean, not that the motives of the other take the place of his own motives, which is as absurd as to say that the food eaten by the other nourishes his own organs, but that the sympathy is stronger than other conflicting motives. When, for example, Sidney gives the water to the soldier, it is not because Sidney actually feels the soldier's thirst, but because Sidney's sympathy for the soldier's sufferings is a stronger motive than his own thirst. Sidney's conduct, as that of the most selfish man, is always determined by his own feelings; but in his case the sympathetic feelings have so great a share in determining conduct, that his compassion is stronger than his thirst. Normally, indeed, we may say that the reflected feeling will be weaker than the original, the feeling produced by the thirst of another than the feeling due to my own thirst; but this direct sympathy may be enforced by others, by a sense of duty, justice, and so forth, so as to have a greater effect upon the conduct. In any case, so far as it is operative, it must be a feeling of the agent, and does not imply that he acts without feeling or is moved by another man's motives, but that the feeling which is due to his knowledge of another man's feelings is abnormally strong.

24. On the other hand, it is equally erroneous to speak of motives as being 'selfish' in any other sense than that already implied, simply because they are my own. This fallacy has already been noticed. If I say, 'I dislike the taste of wine *because* it is unpleasant to me,' I either say the same thing twice or I use words in different senses. I may mean to imply that I dislike the taste because the immediate sensation is disagreeable, and to exclude the hypothesis that I dislike the taste because I think it an indication of unwholesome qualities, or have some accidental association which overpowers the pleasantness of the taste. In that case, I use 'dislike' to include feelings different from the immediate sensation, and 'unpleasant' to denote the sensation alone; and so far my statement may be reasonable, though ambiguously

expressed. Now the egoist sometimes falls into a similar ambiguity in discussing the question of altruism. To say, 'I dislike your pain,' and to say, 'Your pain is painful to me,' is to say the very same thing in different words; but the second statement is something given as an explanation of the first, and not as a simple inversion. The inference thus insinuated is that I dislike your pain because it is painful to me in some special relation. I do not dislike it *as* your pain, but in virtue of some particular consequence, such, for example, as its making you less able to render me a service. But this is really to assert that your pain does not give me pain except as a link in a chain of events which brings about some other disagreeable consequence. In that case, I do not really object to your pain so far as it is your pain, but only by some removable and accidental consequence. What I really dislike is that consequence, whatever it may be; and thus the statement that I dislike your pain becomes perverted into the assertion that I dislike something else; or, in other words, it is inferred that sympathy is a mere delusion.

25. This, indeed, is expressly asserted by some psychologists, who resolve sympathetic emotions into a product of association, and explain regard and dislike to the suffering of others as a case of dislike to the means which survives, when we have forgotten, for a time at least, the ends to which they originally owed their attractiveness. If I am right in the foregoing argument, that is a totally inadequate explanation of the phenomenon. The pain due to the pain of others is a direct and necessary result of the very process of thinking about others. A process of association is no doubt implied, in so far as it is only by association (so at least I should say) that we can learn to interpret certain sounds, sights, and so forth, as indicative of the emotions of others. But we must so interpret them in order to reason at all about the world of thought and feeling, and in so interpreting them we learn to sympathise. Your pain is not painful to me because I infer that some other consequence will result to me, but because the thought of your pain is itself painful.

26. This, indeed, introduces another consideration which

must be taken into account. It is, in fact, true that your pain can only be painful to me under a certain condition; the condition, namely, that I must know of it or believe in it. The sympathetic emotions, in other words, are clearly dependent upon a reasoning process, which cannot be said of some other feelings; and we may ask how far this may suggest any distinction between the altruistic and the non-altruistic emotions. It does obviously suggest a distinction which is ofttimes of great importance, and which shows that there is a gap between simple sympathy and fully developed altruism. We may, in fact, admit that your pain may be intrinsically painful to me without admitting that I, therefore, become altruistic in the fullest sense. Sympathy may establish only a temporary coincidence, not a permanent identity of interest. You and I are at one so far as it is true that the relief of your suffering would relieve me; but we are not really one, and therefore my suffering may be relievable by means which would not relieve yours. If we were inseparably united; if, for example, we were confined in a single cell, so that I necessarily had your sufferings constantly before my eyes, and could not get rid of the sympathetic pain without getting rid of its cause, the original pain, our interests would be so far identical, and it would seem to be an unimportant subtlety to consider whether my desire for your comfort were properly to be called selfish or altruistic. The same conduct would be dictated on either hypothesis, as our interests would be virtually identical. It is clear, however, that this identity can never be perfectly realised. The pain given by your pain may simply induce me to shut my eyes. The Pharisee who passed by on the other side may have disliked the sight of the wounded traveller as much as the good Samaritan. Indeed the sight of suffering often directs irritation against the sufferer. Dives is often angry with Lazarus for exposing his sores before a respectable mansion; and sometimes goes so far as to think, illogically perhaps, that the beggar must have cultivated his misery in order to irritate the nerves of his neighbours. To give the order, 'Take away that damned Lazarus,' may be as natural an impulse as to say, 'Give him the means of curing his ailments.'

27. The fact thus stated is undeniable. It must be observed that the limitation which it implies does not apply to the sympathetic motives, but to every instinct of our natures, in so far as they involve a belief in the distant or the future. We do not wonder that a man should continue to suffer from a disease because we see at once that he cannot help it; but we think of a sympathetic emotion as something which can be helped. We can, we say, dismiss or entertain a thought at our pleasure. It is painful to think of a neighbour's disease. Then cease to think of it. The remedy is in every one's hands. Why not adopt it? To this we may answer, in the first place, that, as a matter of fact, it is very generally adopted. People reconcile themselves very quickly to the misfortunes of others, and precisely by ceasing to think about them. Not only so, but in many cases the remedy is not only common, but often irresistible, and often (though I am perhaps anticipating) perfectly consistent with morality. I do not worry myself about the bad government of Timbuctoo much more than I worry myself about the uninhabitable condition of the moon, and for the same reason—that I can do nothing to improve either. It would seem to be a general law that feelings which do not or cannot produce any effect upon conduct tend to become faint, and ultimately to disappear. And, morally speaking, deliberate indulgence in emotions of the painful kind at least, which bear no fruit in action, is so much waste of power, and so far condemnable. If I am dreaming about the millennium or fretting about the evils of Chinese despotism, I am throwing away energies which might improve the pauperism of London or contribute to the social enjoyments of my next-door neighbours. But to say generally that I can annihilate my sympathies because they give me pain is clearly untrue. I can only abolish thoughts when there is a sufficient motive to lead me into a different train of thought. I can perhaps get rid of the thought of my neighbour's suffering more easily than I can get rid of certain material conditions. But the simple fact that a particular emotion is dependent for its existence upon an intellectual state does not enable men to suppress it. I should perhaps be happier if I

could forget that a surgeon was in the next room ready to operate upon me in an hour, but I cannot therefore fix my mind upon a novel. The general who broods over possible defeat after giving his orders, the speculator who has a foretaste of ruin which he cannot avoid, are on the highroad to suicide. Yet the actual pain, added to the knowledge that the reflection only aggravates the evil, leaves men unable to distract their minds, or to refrain from drinking the bitter cup by anticipation as well as in reality. The sympathetic emotions are equally potent. When a blow is hanging over my family, when I see symptoms of deadly and incurable disease in wife and child, I cannot dispel my melancholy, however clearly I know it to be useless. It must be added that, although I have spoken of sympathy with pain, partly because it is the keenest and most conspicuous phenomenon, it is also true that great part of our pleasure is dependent upon sympathy, and that the two are inseparably associated. If I am to live with my friends, I must share both their joys and sorrows; and the real question which I have to decide is not whether I will drop a particular pain, but whether I will or will not live the wider or the narrower existence. If I can abstract my mind from thoughts of danger to my wife and child, I also must give up all the enjoyment which is involved in the close companionship.

28. The true statement would therefore recognise the fact that emotions are inevitable, whether sympathetic or not, in proportion not simply to the pain and pleasure at the moment, but to the intensity and to the degree in which they form part of my world—the world which is constituted not by the mere sensations, but by the whole system of thoughts and emotions sustained by the framework of perception. I can no more strike out at will a fragment of the world which is recognised through the intellect, than of that which is directly revealed through the sensations. The two form a continuous whole, which is only modified in a subordinate degree by the shrinking from pain or the absorption in pleasure. An emotion closely bound up with some vivid sensation or perception from which I cannot free myself is so far the more

inevitable. This is equally true whether sympathetic feeling is present or absent. As a fact, it is generally easier to get rid of a sick friend than of a tooth-ache; but the pain of suffering with him may generate the desire to relieve his sufferings rather than the desire to forget them, if his life is so bound up with my own that the selfish remedy is in fact impossible under existing conditions, or if the action of desertion appears to me as so repulsive in itself that the pain of the sympathy is overpowered by the painfulness of acting badly.

29. This consideration shows that the degree in which our happiness is associated with the happiness of others is closer than we might at first sight suppose. It may be necessary to my happiness that I should relieve Lazarus, not only when he is actually present, or when I foresee some ill consequences to me from his misfortunes, but also when I am, for any reason, unable to dismiss the thought of his sufferings. In many cases this may be impossible without such a dislocation of my whole system of thought and feeling as may, for some reason, be impossible. But we cannot yet say that my conduct is altruistic until we know what is the condition which makes it impossible for me to separate my interests from those of the other. I am still, it may be urged, as selfish in desiring relief from the vicarious as from the original pain. I desire a fire as warming and a friend's happiness as cheering; the desire for warmth could not prompt a desire for a fire which could not warm—say, a fire in the moon—except by a mistaken inference or an arbitrary association of ideas; and similarly it may be said that sympathy can only prompt the desire for a friend's happiness in so far as it cheers me. That is to say, it is still my own happiness which I desire. The association of my own happiness with that of my friends is still extrinsic. I am sympathetic but not truly altruistic. If and wherever they can be separated, therefore, I shall be decided simply by the consideration of the consequences to me. Wherever it is possible to obtain relief from the sympathetic pain by abolishing Lazarus instead of making him happy, I shall abolish him. This, it may be said, remains equally true whether the

tie which binds me to Lazarus is such as does or does not involve conditions dependent upon any intellectual inferences and beliefs. I shall always, in any case, prefer that course of conduct which is possible (and that of course is always a condition), and which promises the greatest happiness.

## IV. *The Rule of Conduct*

30. This is the question, then, which must be discussed in order to bring out the real meaning of the question at issue. So far, in fact, as we have hitherto gone, we have not recognised any difference between the conduct which does and that which does not imply the presence of sympathetic motive. In both cases there is a subjective and an objective condition; in both cases I am prompted by my own feelings to do what is pleasantest to myself. I do so equally whether I drink the water myself or give it to the sufferer by my side. Where, then, is the difference? Since it cannot be in the fact that in one case I have and in the other I have not feelings, it can only be in the different law of the feeling. In both cases I do what makes me happy, but that which makes me happy is very different in the two cases. A desire for warmth can only prompt a desire for the fire which warms, and a desire for the happiness of another only the happiness which cheers. The statement is the precise equivalent of the other, if we keep strictly to the same meaning. But when we ask what will be the law of the feeling, we see at once that there is an important difference. What happiness will cheer me? Any happiness in which I believe and which I can realise. Time and distance have no significance to me except as diminishing the vividness of the impression. If it is painful to me to realise your suffering when I see the knife cutting your flesh, it is painful to me in a certain proportion to think of the same torture to you in a distant region. As non-sympathetic, I can desire only the fire which warms me and which will warm me; as sympathetic, I desire the fire which warms you in the arctic regions or provides warmth for a distant posterity. My feelings are still my own in either case, but in the latter

case they may prompt me to conduct—such, for example, as economy in fuel for the sake of my grandchildren's hearths—from which I shall derive no benefit. Hence, so far as sympathy is real, it obeys a law which has no necessary reference to any future state of my own; it may operate powerfully even in opposition to any prospect of my happiness to come. The present pain is the reflection of pain which depends upon conditions which have no definite or uniform relation to my future happiness, nor, therefore, to the total happiness which I contemplate from a given course of conduct.

31. With these explanations we may come to the direct issue. Admitting that my conduct must always be conditioned by my feelings—by my aversion to painful and attraction to pleasurable states—are my feelings necessarily determined by the balance of anticipated pain and pleasure? Does the conviction that a certain course of conduct will obtain for me the maximum of pleasure determine me necessarily to adopt it? Does that action always make me happiest which promises most happiness to me? If these statements are mutually equivalent, it would seem that sympathy must be an illusion, and that I can really desire another man's happiness only so far as it is a means to my own happiness. I hold that the inference is wrong, and that the two statements which are regarded by the egoist as identical are really incompatible; and this, I think, is implied in the foregoing arguments. But the point is of such critical importance that I must try to bring out the contrast more clearly.

32. The problem, as I have said, is shortly, What is the 'law' of motive? May it always be described as a desire for the greatest happiness of the agent? Let us ask first whether it can ever be so described. The unreasoning animal acts from blind instinct; his judgments, so far as he judges, are limited to the immediate facts; he judges or sees this to be a fire, that to be a devouring animal, and so forth: but he has no prevision of the remoter consequences, and is therefore neither selfish nor unselfish, for we can only predicate selfishness where there is at once a knowledge and a disregard of the feelings of others. A distinction, however, may already be

made in so far as he possesses instincts which are in consequence, though not in intention, profitable to others. Animals, as I have sufficiently said, possess instincts, such as motherly love, non-essential, and in many cases, and even in the average case, prejudicial to the individual, and yet essential to the race. These instincts, therefore, must be developed as the race thrives, and since the animal has no prevision or only the most rudimentary prevision of consequences, he will act without conscious regard to the consequences. If, in the next place, we suppose the animal to become enlightened so far as to be able to trace remoter consequences—or, in other words, to contemplate the distant and the future as well as the immediate—but without any correlative extension of sympathies, the result would be a limitation of these instincts. The instinct, indeed, would not be abolished; pleasure might still be derived, for example, from the exercise of the maternal functions; but such a pleasure would be in the same category as any of the purely sensual pleasures. A perception that drinking brandy is mischievous—that is, productive of future suffering—does not annihilate the pleasure of brandy-drinking, but it tends to limit the indulgence by introducing the foretaste of misery to come. The instincts of the non-sympathetic agent would in the same way be limited so far as their operation was normally productive of unpleasant consequences; and, as a matter of fact, we may observe frequent exemplifications of this principle. In some societies the unwillingness of women to accept the burdens of maternity is proportioned to their intelligence; the more thoughtless continue to act upon animal instincts which involve ultimate self-sacrifices, whilst the more thoughtful restrain the instinct from purely selfish considerations.

33. That this, indeed, cannot be the normal case follows from what has been said; for, if I am right, the intellectual development must normally coincide with a development of the sympathies, and whatever deflections from this coincidence may be possible will be limited by the operation of our general principle; for if the increased reasoning power meant a diminution of social qualities, the intellect would

exercise a disintegrating and enfeebling influence. The more reasoning society would tend to be supplanted by that which may be called lower so far as less intelligent, but which would be superior in so far as better fitted for the conditions of life. The perception of utility would in such a case, as I have said, be in conflict with the general conditions of utility. If cleverness carried with it, or so far as it carries with it, inferior sociability, it is or would be a mischievous factor, and would tend to be eliminated : the world would be to the stupid. We may say, therefore, that the intellectual development must at least carry with it something which counterbalances this anti-social tendency. In some way, then, this anti-social tendency must be counterbalanced, and this may be done to some extent without assuming any increase of sympathy, for the enlightened instinct would reveal not merely the disadvantages but the advantages of acting for others, and, though it would discourage self-sacrifice, would encourage such action for the good of others as would bear fruit in good for the agent. The difficulty of the question depends upon the intricate intermixture of these intrinsic and extrinsic motives to altruistic conduct, and we must of course admit with the egoist that the extrinsic motives to social conduct exist, and are of great importance, though we deny that they explain the whole phenomenon ; and this is the point which has to be made clear.

34. Now the general principle, which may be called the fundamental axiom of prudence, the rule, namely, ' Act so as to obtain the maximum of happiness,' does not, as we see, hold strictly even of those actions in which there is no admixture of altruistic motives. It cannot, therefore, have that absolute or *a priori* character which is sometimes claimed for it. In order that it may be approximately verified, a condition is requisite which may or may not be fulfilled. The conduct must always be determined in this, as in all cases, by the actually existing feelings. These feelings, again, may include a foretaste of future pleasures and pains. But, as a general rule, the influence of the future pleasure is less

than the influence of the immediate pleasure, the degree in which it is less depending upon the constitution of the agent. For the unreasoning agent the future is simply non-existent; but even for the reasoning agent it does not necessarily follow that conduct will correspond to calculation. If he knows to a certainty that a present sacrifice of pleasure will be repaid in kind by pleasures to come, he may still be unwilling to make the sacrifice—a case which is daily exemplified. He does not care, we may say, for the future self as much as for the present self. It is true, however, that, so far as he reasons, he tends to regard the future as well as the present, and therefore, we may say, approximates to an adoption of the prudential axiom. The more reasonable he is, the closer he comes to it; but it still represents an ideal limit never actually realised, and implying a corresponding balance of passions which may be more or less perfectly achieved. And even the approximation is possible in virtue of the normal conditions of life. It is only in rare cases that we have to make the kind of choice suggested between an isolated pleasure in the future or one in the present. If I had a fixed number of cakes I might ask whether I should obtain the maximum pleasure by eating all to-day or leaving part for to-morrow. The answer would be determined by the relative power of the immediate appetite and the foretaste; and the stronger my reasoning, the greater the probability that the perception of the maximum happiness would represent the governing motive. As a rule, however, the case is simpler. What is pleasantest now is also most productive of pleasure. To eat my dinner to-day is normally a condition towards eating a dinner to-morrow. My appetites have already been regulated when I set up as a reasoning being. Each had a place in my system, and a force proportioned to its normal utility. The appetite for food already approximately corresponds to the need for food; that is, to the importance of the function in the whole system of life. To satisfy the appetite is therefore to satisfy the conditions of health, and therefore of maximum enjoyment. The reason finds the problem already approximately solved, and has

only to work out a closer approximation. It starts with instincts already harmonised, not antagonistic; and therefore in fulfilling the dictates of pleasure I am already acting with an unconscious reference to the needs of my whole life. The instincts have been moulded by the conditions, though they do not consciously attend to them. What is true (as I may note in passing) of the balance between the primary instincts which do not involve sympathy holds true equally when sympathy is introduced. Normally it is prudent to be virtuous, a point which will have to be considered more fully hereafter.

35. Meanwhile we may say that, as a rule—leaving the question of sympathy out of account—an increase of reason implies an approximation to the prudential maxim: that is to say, that, as a fact, the working of the instincts or feelings which dictates conduct approximately coincides with the prevision as to the maximum of happiness obtainable by the agent. This, however, is not an *a priori* principle, dependent or incapable of being denied without contradiction, but a deduction from the general conditions of life and the mode of development of the faculties; and the closeness of the approximation depends upon extrinsic conditions. The bare foresight that I am sacrificing the maximum of pleasure to an immediate pleasure certainly does not make yielding to temptation impossible. It only makes it unreasonable in a sense in which unreason is thoroughly possible. I may know that I should gain a greater amount of happiness if the door of a public-house were locked; but the knowledge is not equivalent to locking the door. Still, so far—that is, excluding all question of sympathy—we accept the maxim as expressing the general law of the operative motive in reasonable beings in proportion as they are reasonable. In all cases the conduct depends upon the actual mechanism of motive, but that mechanism is so arranged that it is possible for the immediate conduct to act in conformity with the formula.

36. We now have to introduce the sympathetic motives, and to inquire whether the same formula is applicable or approximately applicable. The sympathetic feeling, again,



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is one of which it is the law that your pain is therefore painful to me. The reasoning agent, in so far as not altruistic, suffers from the knowledge that he will suffer hereafter, and, so far as altruistic, he suffers from the knowledge that some one else is suffering or is about to suffer. And, again, I have already remarked that sympathetic motives are not necessarily contrasted with others in respect either of their consequences or of the fact that they are still feelings of the agent. The sympathetic motives, so to speak, always develop within the framework already provided by the other motives, and the two are often inextricably blended. The external bond of maternity, implying no perception of the feelings of the offspring, develops into the closer union in which the sympathetic feeling becomes predominant, and both forms may persist at any stage of development. The mother may still admire the child as she admires a flower, independently, that is, of any recognition of its consciousness, and this sentiment may blend indissolubly with the same maternal love; and, again, the non-sympathetic feeling may prompt to a virtual self-sacrifice. A passion for beauty regarded as a purely external quality may lead to imprudence as well as the higher motive of personal affection; and, in both cases, again, self-sacrifice is impossible in the sense of action against the predominant motive. Maternal love is still a feeling of the mother, and therefore we have only to suppose it strong enough to make self-sacrifice in a given case impossible. For the pang of inflicting injury upon the child might be so great that no other pleasure of which the mother is capable could repay it. In this case, then, it might be urged that the highest self-devotion was no devotion at all, for it is still obedience to the mother's own feelings. In other words, if we regard consequences, the least sympathetic action may imply self-sacrifice, whilst the most sympathetic may apparently be still selfish. This confusion follows if we attempt to base our distinction upon the bare fact, common to all actions, that they have both subjective and objective conditions.

37. Let us return, then, to the other problem, what is the law of the two classes of motives? Omitting the sympathetic

emotions, we have seen that the reasonable agent approximates to an acceptance of the prudential axiom. Supposing, then, a case in which the sympathetic feelings do not come into play—as, for example, a case in which we are concerned with lifeless objects alone—the maxim can be applied without difficulty. No conflicting motive opposes itself to the rejection of any course from which we anticipate a balance of unhappiness. We may calculate badly or we may be misled by association. We sometimes acquire a kind of sentiment in regard even to inanimate objects, misled, it may be, by a kind of childish anthropomorphism which leads us to treat them as though they had feelings, and to preserve them even at some cost of happiness to ourselves. But so far as our action implies any assumption of this kind, we feel it to be unreasonable, and it tends to disappear as we become more reasonable. We suppress it if we wish to act consistently. We approach more closely to the only assignable rule of conduct in such cases, that which prescribes action for a maximum of happiness. Since by hypothesis we are the only persons concerned, we are the only persons whose happiness can be reasonably taken into account. If the maxim applies unreasonably, we must treat every case in the same way. The mother must be ready to abandon her child whenever she anticipates more misery than happiness from the connection. This is not only the sole rule when we have to deal with material objects, but it is also the rule in so far as we treat sentient beings without regard to their feelings. We throw aside shoes which hurt our feet as soon as we can get better shoes. We may consider human beings as tools, and treat them in the same way. We may discharge an old servant who can no longer do his work without regard to his consequent starvation. If we had no sympathy, this would be the sole rule of action. The same rule, again, is possible in regard to objects (if we may call them objects) to which we do not attribute actual existence. We derive much pleasure from sharing in imagination the sorrows and joys of fictitious persons. We may follow the histories of Juliet or of Jeanie Deans with an interest not differing in kind from that which we feel for real human

beings; and in this case (assuming this pleasure to be our sole motive for reading) the only rational principle will be to dismiss the fictitious persons from our thoughts, so far as we are able to do it, directly the imagination gives us more pain than pleasure. The more reasonable we are, the more consistently we shall obey this principle, though, of course, habit and accidental associations often make our observance of it uncertain. And here, again, it is possible and common to act in the same way in regard to human beings—to treat them as mere dreams which pass from existence as soon as they pass beyond our sphere of observation. We read habitually of events in a distant country as we read of events in a novel, with little more belief in their objective existence—that is, in their existence independently of our consciousness. Too often we treat even our friends as old kings treated their fools—as sources of amusement, to be annihilated for us as soon as they cease to be amusing. To do so is to treat the object as though it were unreal or existed solely in relation to us.

38. The difference, then, between the two cases is, in this respect, sharply marked, and corresponds to the principles already laid down. To believe in the objective existence of anything is to believe that it exists independently of my feelings—to believe that it is still there when I shut the eyes of my body or of my mind. To believe in the existence of a sentient being is to believe that it has feelings which may persist when I am not aware of them. A real belief, again, implies that at the moment of belief I have representative sensations or emotions corresponding to those which imply the actual presence of the object. Again, a material object has an interest only so far as it is a condition of some kind of feeling, and, when the sympathies are not concerned, of some feeling of my own, whether implying or not implying any foretaste of the future. To take any interest in any material object, therefore, except in this relation, is unreasonable, as it is unreasonable to desire food which cannot nourish or fire which cannot warm. I want something which has by hypothesis no relation to my wants. The same is true of the sentient object so long, and only so long, as I do not take its sentience into account.

But to take the sentience into account is to sympathise, or at least the sympathy is implied in the normal or only possible case. The only condition necessary for the sympathy to exist, and to be capable therefore of becoming a motive, is that I should really believe in the object, and have, therefore, representative feelings. To believe in it is to feel for it, to have sympathies which correspond to my representations, less vivid as the object is more distant and further from the sphere of my possible influence, but still real and therefore effective motives. Systematically to ignore these relations, then, is to act as I should act if I were an egoist in the extremest sense, and held that there was no consciousness in the world except my own. But really to carry out this principle is to be an idiot, for an essential part of the world as interesting to me is constituted by the feelings of other conscious agents, and I can only ignore their existence at the cost of losing all the intelligence which distinguishes me from the lower animal.

39. What, then, is the law of the motives when the influence of sympathy is admitted? Can it still be said that I shall always act for my own greatest happiness? That, as we have seen, must be approximately the law of motive for the non-sympathetic animal, inasmuch as his conduct is governed by his feelings, and those feelings can only be distinguished by including or excluding a foretaste of feelings to come, but still of his own. The only elements in the problem are therefore the feelings of the agent himself, including the anticipations of his future state, and I have suggested reasons for thinking that the correlation must be such that his perceptions of maximum happiness will naturally coincide with the strongest motive. When we introduce the sympathetic feelings, it still remains as true as before that the agent is governed by his own feelings, but the law is no longer stateable in the same way. It is true, in mathematical phrase, that the conduct of the agent is a function of his feelings, but some of the feelings are themselves functions of independent variables, namely, the feelings of others, and we therefore cannot deduce the law of conduct from the agent considered by himself. The colour of a reflecting body depends upon the intimate structure of the body, as

much as the colour of the non-reflecting body, but the law of the colour will in one case necessarily include, and in the other necessarily exclude, a reference to the surrounding bodies. This, as I take it, gives the true and only tenable line of distinction. The sympathetic being, that is, becomes, in virtue of his sympathies, a constituent part of a larger organisation. He is no more intelligible by himself alone than the limb is in all its properties intelligible without reference to the body. Each part of the body must of course be governed by its own properties, but they work in such intimate connection with the whole organism, that they are only intelligible, or, in other words, we can only obtain the law of their action, when we take the whole body into account. This is equally true of the being which has become part of the social organism. It is true, we may say, in respect of the direct sympathies which bind him to some other person, so that his friend's joys and sorrows are also his own. It is true, again, whenever such sympathies give rise to a corporate spirit, to the domestic bonds which unite families, the patriotism of states, or the military spirit of an army. It is equally true of those instincts, the sense of honour, and so forth, which are generated by the social factor, and which, though they do not imply the presence of any special organisation, are essential to the constitution of the social tissue. All such instincts are products, we must suppose, of sympathy; their growth and strength imply a capacity in each of feeling for others; and being accessible to impulses not implying changes in the physical organisation, they are so worked into the most essential modes of thought and feeling that they must count as underlying and primary instincts, and any personal element has been eliminated by the very process of propagation. Though feelings of the individual, their law can only be determined by reference to the general social conditions.

40. This, again, enables us to state in what sense the prudential axiom must now be limited. To become reasonable is (to my mind, at least) to act on general principles, and to act consistently; and this, as I have said, includes the condition that a statement of the real cause of my action should

equally assign the reason of my actions. The law which my feelings actually follow must coincide with the principle which commends itself to my reason. In order, then, that a being provided with social instincts should act reasonably, it is necessary, not that he should take that course of conduct which gives the greatest chances of happiness, but that which gives the greatest chance of happiness to that organisation of which he forms a constituent part. Certain external conditions were necessary, as I have said, to the adoption even of the prudential axiom—the condition, namely, that the immediate pleasure should not be normally inconsistent with the greatest sum of pleasure; and it is of course still more obvious that in the other case the weak and intermittent sympathies of the less social man should not be naturally out of harmony with the purely non-sympathetic instincts. As a rule, the instincts of the social organism must be closely coincident with those of the individual; in fighting for his tribe the savage must be fighting for himself. Even in the highest societies both reason and sympathy are feeble enough, but every extension of reasoning power implies a wider and closer identification of self with others, and therefore a greater tendency to merge the prudential in the social axiom as a first principle of conduct. In the highest conceivable stage, a large part of conduct is still prompted by motives in which the sympathies are not concerned, just as in the highest organisms each organ has some properties which have no reference to the organic union. But this, as has been sufficiently said, implies no incompatibility except in particular cases, and it is equally true that so soon as I become sympathetic, even in the slightest degree, and thereby accessible to the social instincts, the purely prudential maxim ceases to give the true law of motive, and therefore of conduct, in all the cases in which the sympathies or the derivative instincts are called into action.

41. The explanation may be completed by considering the prudential turn given to the facts upon the egoistic hypothesis. That hypothesis starts from the theory, which I have criticised upon different grounds, that reasoned action means action for an end. I admit, of course, the truth implied in this state-

ment, that in reasoned conduct every action is regarded not merely in isolation but as part of a system, and therefore includes more or less conscious reference to the future as well as to the present; but I have further remarked that this must not be so interpreted as to imply that the subjective condition of conduct can ever be anything else than the present feeling. As soon as we slide into that fallacious statement, we adopt the egoistic formula, for in that case the dependent or identical proposition that the conduct of an agent is determined by his own feelings, since otherwise it would not be his own conduct, is expressed by saying that his end must be his own happiness. Even when we have to do with the sympathetic feelings, of which it is the primary characteristic, from their most elementary form, that they reflect the feelings of others, they have to be forced into conformity with this formula; and we therefore have to assume that in all cases of sympathetic feeling there is an egoistic end, which is dropped from consciousness at the moment of action. This, upon my theory, is to admit that all such conduct is unreasonable, or that it would tend to become impossible in proportion as our reason, and therefore our prevision of future consequences, became stronger. This argument, however, is sometimes met by accepting the apparent paradox, and declaring that a man may be the happier by taking for his 'end' that which is not the ultimate end. This, indeed, would still leave any case of real self-sacrifice unreasonable; for the advantage, whatever it may be, of attending exclusively to the immediate end cannot make it reasonable to pursue that end at the expense of the ultimate end; but it may be taken to explain why, in point of fact, men may find pleasure in pursuing the good of others when they anticipate no ultimate good to themselves.

42. Now this statement certainly expresses an important psychological truth, which may be worth considering in many cases. It is no doubt true that the pleasure of any emotional state is in proportion to its intensity, and therefore to the exclusion of all other emotions for the time. We may put this into a paradoxical shape if we say that our knowledge of any feeling is proportional to its intensity, and yet that the

greater the intensity the less we can know of it. This is only a way of putting the fact that the presentative knowledge excludes for the time the representative. I know anything the more I know its relations to other things, and I know a feeling as I know the conditions under which it arises. I know it, again, the better as I have felt it more keenly, but at the moment the intense feeling excludes all reflection, and therefore its intensity suppresses knowledge at the instant, though it is a condition of knowledge when I come to reflect. In the same way we may hold that when a man is acting for any end whatever, he may gain it more effectually by not thinking about it at the time. If I aim at a mark in order to win a prize, I must not think of the prize whilst I am aiming, for to think of the prize is to allow a number of distracting representations to interfere with my absorption in the immediate action, and they may be equally distracting at the moment, whether they are in some way connected or not connected with the action, whether they are thoughts of the cheers which are to greet my success, or thoughts of some entirely different character. Exclusion of everything irrelevant and extrinsic, absolute concentration upon a single end, is a general condition of successful action, even when that special end is part of a larger whole, and would not be desired unless it contributed to something else.

43. This is clear enough, and it holds good of course of many altruistic actions. I may do good to a man in order to attain a reward; I shoot at a mark to gain the prize; I cure a patient to get the fee. And, in point of fact, I think that, as a rule, the mind generally 'flickers'—that it runs along a chain of consequences, stopping sometimes at one point, sometimes at another, dwelling upon the final success or the intermediate struggle, and therefore taking various, though, so far as it is reasonable, consistent or mutually dependent ends. But this statement does not in the least affect the reality of each of the motives called into play. I have no right to select the last state anticipated, and to say that this alone is the essential motive, even though other motives taken by themselves may be insufficient without it. Every part of the fore-

seen consequences has its effect as much as the ostensible end. I aim at the mark to get the prize; that is, if it were not for the prize I should not aim. But it is equally true that the desire for the prize would not make me aim if the act of aiming were itself disagreeable in a certain degree. Nor, again, could I dismiss from my mind all thoughts of the end, and therefore I could not fulfil the necessary condition of success unless the action were agreeable up to a certain point. It must be in itself tolerable, or I should have to call up a thought of extrinsic consequences, and so far to distract my mind; and therefore the necessity of 'disengagement' proves nothing against the reality of each motive, which has for the moment to be (if I may say so) self-supporting. On the contrary, in order that it may be self-supporting, the motive must be real.

44. This is equally true in the case of the benevolent action. The physician is not benevolent enough to cure me unless he expects a fee; but unless he is really kind, unless, that is, he has a real sympathy for my suffering, he must be always thinking of his fee, which is a very different thing. He cannot be really benevolent so long as he regards his patient simply as an instrument upon which he is to operate for the sake of pay, without real interest in its feelings. I need not ask whether he will or will not be a better physician for being benevolent or not; though one may perhaps admit that on some occasions he will do well to suspend both his sympathies and his desire of fees, and to fall back upon the simple pleasure of skilful energy. But in any case, if he has to forget his fee for the time, some other genuine motive must take its place; and though the desire to relieve is only one of the possible substitutes, it must be real so far as it has to produce any influence. And a real sympathy, so far as it exists, is at once a feeling which does not conform to the purely prudential axiom. He cannot be so good even as a physician unless he is accessible to motives which may carry him beyond the area of professional success. The whole argument, in fact, merely comes to this, that in the complex system of actions which constitute the active life of any

reasonable being, the suppression of any one motive would clearly involve the alteration of others; our sympathies would often be stifled if it were not for the co-operation of motives of a different kind, and our non-sympathetic feelings would be equally limited in their range if such modes of action would not operate by motives which rest essentially upon sympathetic feeling.

45. And this suggests a remark which will have to be developed hereafter. The difference between the sympathetic and the non-sympathetic feelings is a difference, as we have seen, in their law or in the fundamental axiom which they embody. When the egoist, therefore, maintains that it is paradoxical to say that a man can be the happier for aiming at something which is not his own happiness, he means that a man cannot be the happier for sensibility to motives which obey a different law from that of the simple desire for his own happiness. Now from what has gone before, it is plain that this paradox has really no meaning for us. It is true that the man acquires sympathies which may deviate from the law of prudence, and which may therefore involve self-sacrifice. Even the non-sympathetic instincts may, as I have argued, involve self-sacrifice, and self-sacrifice is clearly not essential to the sympathetic instincts; it is only an incident which has more or less importance according as the interests of the society conflict more or less with those of the individual. If and in so far as this conflict does not exist, there is no paradox in supposing that the sympathetic is happier than the non-sympathetic being. He differs in having acquired new sensibilities; he is not the same man acting from different motives, which is, in fact, a contradictory assumption but a different being with a different set of faculties; he has gained a fresh capacity which has fresh advantages as well as fresh dangers. It has indeed this plain advantage, that he cannot develop as a reasonable agent without it. To be reasonable, he must be sympathetic; to be thoroughly and systematically selfish, he must be an idiot; or, in other words, we may say that he has made a bargain, in virtue of which he makes a common stock of pains and

pleasures with the whole society to which he belongs, and acquires all the new advantages which are dependent upon the social union. We shall have to consider more fully whether the bargain be a good one or a bad one; but we have at least no *a priori* right to say that it is bad; for if it carries with it an obligation to occasional self-sacrifice, we cannot tell whether the obligation is or is not oppressive on the whole till we can tell how it operates in fact and what are the correlative advantages which it implies.

## CHAPTER VII

### MERIT

### I. *The Conception of Merit*

1. Altruism is, as I have argued, the faculty essentially necessary to moral conduct. Were it not a reality, virtue would be a name and society an impossibility. But, as I have also said, the altruistic sentiment is not to be identified with morality. I can only be an efficient member of any society so far as I can identify myself with others. As altruistic, I can imbibe the corporate spirit of any social organism, and become absorbed in my regiment, my church, my family, or my club; but the sentiment itself thus generated is something different from the altruism of which it is a product. The elementary sympathy must be regulated and disciplined in order that it may give rise to the truly moral sentiments. Virtues which belong to the type of truthfulness and justice generally imply a severe restraint of the immediate sympathetic impulses. A hatred of lying is a virtue, because the typical character, as determined by the conditions of social vitality, includes thorough trustworthiness. But at any given moment the love of truth may dictate conduct which, at first sight, at any rate, is contrary to that dictated by the love of our neighbours. Hence virtue implies more than simple altruism or benevolence, namely, the elaboration and regulation of the sympathetic character which takes place through the social factor.

2. The recognition of this leads to a corresponding recognition of another aspect of the same process. As altruistic or sympathetic, we are not only sensitive to the pains and pleasures of others, but we catch the contagion of their complex sentiments. We share their prejudices and passions,

their loves, hatreds, and modes of estimating men and things. We come to love and hate our own qualities, with a love and hatred reflected from the feelings of our neighbours, and transmuted in this case into remorse or self-complacency. As altruistic we are fitted into the social medium and inoculated with its characteristic sentiments. Hence we have, amongst other things, the complex sentiment of moral approval and disapproval. If virtue were identical with altruism, we might identify moral approval with gratitude. It would be simply a case of loving the man who does us a good turn, because his action implies love for us or for our fellows. But this seems to be an inadequate account of the peculiar sentiment which is elaborated in any complex social structure. The approval of which virtue is the object requires to be explained, as well as the motives of which virtue is the fruit. In both cases we have to consider sentiments which imply the existence of a true altruism, but which also imply some modification of the altruistic feelings.

3. Hence arise certain problems which require discussion, and which take various forms according to the aspect under which we regard them. The moral code itself, according to the principles hitherto expounded, is briefly a statement of the conditions of social vitality. A man is said to do his *duty* when he obeys this code. He has *merit* in so far as he obeys the law; or, according to some theories, he has merit if he exceeds it, and demerit if he falls short of it. He is under an *obligation*, again, to obey the law, as merit implies the fulfilment of the obligation. He is *virtuous* so far as his character secures that his conduct shall be invariably in conformity with the law; and the *conscience* is the feeling or group of feelings which make conformity pleasant and a want of conformity painful to him. He is morally *responsible* for the duties which he is able to perform. These various phrases are, of course, closely connected. To explain one, therefore, is, in fact, necessarily to explain the other. In some cases we think primarily of the social sentiment of approval and disapproval, and in the others of the motives by which the agent is actuated in virtuous conduct. Conduct is meritorious when

regarded as giving a claim upon the approval of others, and is virtuous when we think of it as implying a disposition of spontaneous conformity to the moral law. There is the same kind of difference between the words virtue and merit as there is between the words reason and argument. A reason is an argument when it is applied to convince others, and an argument is a reason when it supplies the ground of the individual conduct. But there are certain difficulties which are specially connected with each aspect; they are so far distinct that they can be separately discussed, and perhaps it does not much matter in what order we take them. I propose first to discuss the problems connected with the theory of merit, and by showing how the conception of merit depends upon that of virtue we shall clear the ground for the final question as to the nature of virtuous motive and conscience. I take for granted for the present that intrinsically virtuous motive is possible; that is, that a man may be so constituted as to obey the moral law unconditionally. I say, then, that he is meritorious in so far as he is thus constituted, and I shall try to explain certain fallacies which obscure this part of the subject.

4. Merit, in the first place, clearly implies a close connection with virtue. We may assume that, *ceteris paribus*, it is proportioned to virtue. That man is the most meritorious who, under the same conditions, is most virtuous, and that conduct the most meritorious which requires the greatest virtue for its performance. Merit, in the next place, seems to carry a reference to some reward. So far as meritorious, a man has a claim upon the approval of his fellows or (upon some systems) a claim upon the justice of his Maker. It is even supposed, in some superstitions, that he can obtain a claim which may be passed to the credit of others. The genesis, then, of the theory seems to be simple. So far as we share the moral sentiment, we wish that virtue should be stimulated, and therefore that it should be rewarded. The moral rule begins, as I have argued, in the external form; it is stated, 'Do this,' instead of 'Be this.' So long as it is in this form we need not attend to the motives of the agent. The conduct is approved simply because it is useful, and it is

equally useful whatever his motives. I desire that a man should not cut my throat, and may care little whether he is restrained by a fear of the gallows or of hell, or by a desire of payment, or by sympathy for me. As the moral sentiment develops I come to approve of the motives which imply true morality, or of such a dislike to cutting my throat as is founded not upon the extrinsic and separable motive, but upon the intrinsic and inseparable motives of humanity and good will. But this development does not imply that the old motive is superseded, only that it is less prominent. The fear of punishment may be operative or capable of being called into activity. I still desire that my throat should not be cut, and therefore that the gallows should remain applicable in case of need, though I desire also that the case may occur as seldom as possible, and that men may be actuated as much as possible by the motives which are opposed to murder as such, irrespectively of possible penal consequences, and so far as I make this distinction I recognise a difference in the merit of the two classes of persons. The man, I say, is meritorious who does from an intrinsic motive what another man will do only from an extrinsic motive. The villain only dislikes hanging and murder so far as it leads to hanging; the benevolent man objects to murder whether it has or has not bad consequences to himself. I consider, therefore, that he has a certain claim upon me and upon society at large, inasmuch as he has done for nothing what another man will only do for pay, or has refrained spontaneously from doing something from which another man can only be restrained by threats and coercion.

5. The principle so far seems to be simple enough, though, like many simple principles, it leads to some intricate questions. If we wish well to virtue, it is suggested, we must wish virtue to be rewarded, and yet with the certainty of reward virtue disappears. A man saves my life out of sheer benevolence, and I reward him out of sheer gratitude. But if he had a right to be rewarded, or could count upon reward as a certainty, he would so far cease to be virtuous. He would be saving my life from avarice instead of benevolence. So far as

I stimulate the extrinsic, I deduct from the intrinsic motive. The contrast, of course, appears in many theological controversies. If virtue is to be rewarded by heaven and vice by hell, do they not, it has been asked, cease to be virtuous and vicious? One difficulty which applies to human laws can of course be avoided. A human legislator cannot secure the coincidence of the extrinsic with the intrinsic motive. If he pays for virtue, a love of pay takes the place of a love of virtue, and love of pay may be pressed into the service of vice; a system of rewards may suggest a system of bribes, and thus no external sanction can be uniformly annexed to the moral law. The divine legislator is of course bound by no such restrictions; he may secure the absolute coincidence of the two classes of motive, and may affix to virtuous and vicious conduct consequences which are not the necessary outcome of the conduct itself. The purely self-regarding motive may thus always operate in the same direction with the altruistic. The question remains (with which I have nothing to do here), whether such a theory does not destroy the essence of virtue by making the appearance of altruism a mere illusion? In any case, it illustrates the fact that merit represents the claim of the virtuous person upon the universe. In so far as he desires no reward here, he is held to deserve a reward hereafter; and we need not here inquire how, upon this hypothesis, a satisfactory distinction can be drawn between prudence which aims at an immediate, and virtue which aims at a remote advantage.

6. Merit, then, is a function of the social forces by which our characters are moulded. It is attributed to any one in so far as he dispenses with any extrinsic stimulus, or, in other words, with motives which are equally available for other purposes. Thus we find that the wants of mankind in particular social stages generate a particular respect for certain virtues, which under different conditions cease to be valued so highly, because the wants can be supplied without calling the virtue into play. In sparsely settled countries, for example, hospitality is stimulated by its obvious convenience. A man is forced, on penalty of forfeiting the esteem of himself and

his neighbours, to render services for nothing which would elsewhere be rendered for pay. He is regarded as a churl if he turns away a stranger from his door. The sentiment is developed wherever the conditions occur which make the practice obviously convenient, and may be described by saying that in such regions a man is induced to do what an innkeeper does elsewhere, not by the prospect of a bill, but by dread of incurring contempt, or by the corresponding sentiment which has become a part of his own character. It does not of course follow that when the social demand is lowered, the general level of virtue is lowered. A man who lives in London may be called upon to approach a higher standard of benevolence in general than an Arab in the desert or a backwoodsman in America. But this particular kind of benevolence is not demanded from him to the same extent, and we do not censure him for a want of hospitality when he sends a foreigner to a hotel or passes on a tramp to the casual ward. A similar change takes place in regard to many duties which in a rude state of society depend upon the voluntary public spirit of individuals, and which are provided for in more civilised conditions by a regular part of the social machinery. The demand for certain manifestations of virtue becomes less when society is so constituted that the corresponding kind of conduct can be commanded without calling for self-sacrifice. Whenever society finds sacrifice of the individual necessary, it pays for it, we may say, in terms of merit. The deserving person has a blank form of credit upon the world at large, not to be filled up in terms of hard cash. The whole demand for benevolence may increase whilst special modes of benevolence are less necessary, and therefore regarded with less respect.

7. The conception of merit has thus a close analogy to the economical conception of value. We may define merit as the value set upon virtue. We have to distinguish between the merit and the intrinsic virtue of an action as economists distinguish between the value of any commodity as equivalent to its intrinsic utility and what is called the value in exchange. Water, as the economists tell us, has a certain utility, which

is, of course, independent of the abundance or the scarcity of the supply. It has the same effect upon my thirst whether I live upon the borders of a river or can only obtain an occasional bucket from a well. But the value in exchange depends upon the difficulty of attainment, and, in the ordinary case, gravitates towards a certain average standard, dependent upon the various processes which constitute the industrial life of a community. The same statements may be made in regard to virtue and merit. Benevolence, we may say, is always benevolence, and truthfulness, truthfulness; but the estimate set upon these may vary within wide limits. The moral law may remain in a sense unaltered, whilst the price necessary to secure obedience may rise or fall, the merit of obedience being greater in proportion to the quantity of extrinsic motive necessary to enforce obedience upon the average mind. An action is highly meritorious in one country which in another is a mere matter of course. That was regarded as an act of heroic self-restraint in Scipio which would be so natural to a modern general that to praise him for it would be an insult. We scarcely thank a mother for a devotion to her child which, if shown to a stranger, would imply the most unusual benevolence, and therefore the highest merit. In all societies some degree of maternal affection is necessary; but in some, a mother would be praiseworthy for attentions to her child, the neglect of which in others, even for the sake of her own health and comfort, would involve the severest censure. Thus, we may suppose that whilst the scale of duty remains fixed, the zero point of merit may shift upwards or downwards according to circumstance. Of two courses of conduct, the same may be regarded in all cases as the best, but the degree of approval which it invites may change like the price of a commodity. You are no more obliged to a man, it is said, for being commonly honest or decently civil than you have to pay for air in the open fields or for water on the banks of the Nile. Merit thus carries with it a reference to an assumed average standard of conduct, and accrues to the agent in proportion as he reaches that standard. Absolute merit, if the phrase may be used, means a man's virtue, considered ab-

stractedly from the social state and the difficulty of attaining it, whilst merit, in the more ordinary sense, takes those conditions into account. The sober man is in the first sense equally meritorious everywhere, because he everywhere shows the same quality; but sobriety may be called more meritorious in England than in a temperate country, because the average standard of temperance is lower.

8. It is clear, again, from this that merit can only belong to voluntary actions. A man is meritorious in so far as he acts in a way which the average man will only act under from the stimulus of some extrinsic motive. The act, therefore, must spring from his character; it must be the fruit of some motive which we regard as excellent: and if it did not arise from a motive—or, in other words, were not voluntary—it would not, properly speaking, be his conduct at all. The meritorious disposition must be capable of a stimulus from the approval or disapproval of the society. There is no price for commodities the supply of which is entirely beyond the influence of demand, and we do not praise or blame a man for qualities incapable of being altered by our praise or blame. We may like or dislike a man for qualities which we recognise as being entirely beyond control, but the sentiment only becomes praise or blame when we conceive it as having a certain power of modifying its objects. Moral approval is the name of the sentiment developed through the social medium which modifies a man's character in such a way as to fit him to be an efficient member of the social 'tissue.' It is the spiritual pressure which generates and maintains morality. The whole man is moulded by the beliefs and sentiments which he imbibes from the surrounding medium. He may be forced to obey the external law both by intrinsic and extrinsic motives; but so far as he is really and intrinsically moral, his character is regulated and stimulated by the organised opinions of the society to which he belongs. It is plain, therefore, that his merit, which corresponds to the degree in which he has been thus regulated, can only accrue in respect of the qualities capable of being thus influenced, and these are the qualities implied in all voluntary conduct.

9. In saying, then, that a man has merit, we mean that he has virtue, whilst we implicitly recognise the fact that virtue is the product of a certain social discipline. The individual of course may be a more or less favourable subject of such discipline; his innate qualities may be such as spontaneously mould themselves upon the moral code, or such as are only forced into it with great difficulty. They are, in any case, qualities which are modifiable, and susceptible of the social discipline. When a man obeys the moral law from some extrinsic motive, he is not, properly speaking, moral at all; so far as he can properly be called virtuous, it is because the outward has become an inward law; it is no longer a law in the juridical but in a scientific sense; it is not a rule enforced by external sanctions, but the 'law' of his character, or the formula which expresses the way in which he spontaneously acts. Society does not force him to act against his will; it has annexed and conquered his will itself; the obligation is internal, and the action supplies its own motive. The man, if we choose to say so, enforces upon himself, which is the same thing as to say that he does without force that which others can only be made to do by some external force. We imply, therefore, that in this case virtue is intrinsically desirable, or, in the common phrase, becomes its own reward.

10. One other source of possible ambiguity must be noticed. We speak, perhaps, more commonly of the merit of an action than of the merit of the agent. What is meant by such a phrase? Obviously the moral quality, whatever it may be, cannot be attributed to an action as distinguished from the agent. By a kind action we mean the action which is done by a man because of his kindness, or in so far as he is kind. In other words, it is an action which proves him to be kind, or which would not be done unless he were kind. And in the same way, a meritorious action is the action which proves a man to have merit, or, in other words, to be virtuous. Upon this showing—and it is, I think, the only consistent statement of the case—an action is meritorious in so far as it is a manifestation of certain qualities already existing. But we speak of the action rather than the agent as meritorious

for obvious reasons. For, in the first place, we can only know a man's character through his actions. We could not know for certain that Leonidas was a brave man until he had fallen at Thermopylæ, for we cannot see a man's bravery. We therefore may fall into the confusion of speaking as though a quality were more real because it is more clearly established. We are quite right for honouring a man more who has given proofs of courage by his behaviour under danger than one whose courage is only inferred from more indirect inferences. If, then, we mean by merit proved virtue, we may admit that of two equally virtuous men one may have more merit than another. We mean, not that he has more virtue, but that he has shown more. The case, again, is complicated by the reflection that action strengthens habit, and therefore that a man may become actually more virtuous by giving greater proofs of virtue. This being understood, however, it is only a question of words. A man may be equally virtuous whether he has or has not had opportunities of showing his good qualities; his intrinsic merit, therefore, is unaffected. But if by merit we mean the established claim upon our respect, his merit will, of course, be increased according to the opportunities of manifestation. There may have been a hundred men in the English fleet as brave as Nelson, but honour could only be paid to the one who had shown his valour. That only shows that honour in the world cannot be proportioned to the merit absolutely, but only to the merit which has become known.

11. The distinction sometimes gives rise to other difficulties. Moralists have spoken of the goodness of an action as being independent of the motive. Persecution, it has been said, is equally bad, whether it proceeds from a religious motive associated with a mistaken view of duty, or from some worse motive—say, a simple love of despotic power. If we judge morality by 'consequences,' it is equally wrong in both cases, and therefore equally condemnable; and hence, if the merit follows the morality, we must condemn the good man who persecutes from misguided love of truth, and admire the bad man who tolerates out of sheer indifference to truth. The

case is interesting because it suggests some troublesome problems of actual occurrence, but we may answer it sufficiently for our present purpose without much trouble. According to the previous argument, it is the same thing whether I say, 'This is right,' or, 'This is commanded by the moral law,' or, 'This is what all good men will do.' The good man is one who does what is right or what the moral law prescribes, and the moral law prescribes that which is right and which all good men do; and therefore it is a contradiction to say, 'This is right,' and to add that it may be done either by a good man or a bad man. But I have tried to show how such an impression arises. The moral law, 'Do not persecute,' is one of late growth, and for the simple reason that the evil of persecution was not perceived until recently; it therefore presented itself in the first instance in the shape of an external law or a law of expediency; that is to say, some people saw that persecution was mischievous but could not convince others that it was mischievous. Whilst that was the case, a man might persecute from a good motive, say, a love of truth, not seeing that he was doing more harm than good. Just so, as I have said, good men may still advocate protection as well as free trade. If protection were recognised as mischievous, an advocacy of it would necessarily imply selfishness, as at present it may imply either selfishness or intellectual error. But whilst a proposed rule is in this state, whilst its good or evil results are still disputed, and a conviction of its advantage has not forced itself into the accepted moral standard, it is not properly a moral rule at all, or it is a moral rule only for the more enlightened, who understand its true nature. In saying, then, that it is wrong to persecute, the early advocates of toleration meant that persecution was mischievous, and therefore wrong for those who recognised the mischief; but they might admit that a 'good' man might still persecute if he did not see the mischief, meaning by a good man a man of benevolence and love of truth, but of a certain degree of stupidity.

12. Hence we may see what is the true criterion and the cause of difficulty in its application. A given action, as

defined by its external relations, may always, as I have said, be brought under various principles; or, in other words, the conduct may be the result of various motives. Heretics may be burnt from religious or political motives, or spared from religious indifference or out of respect for veracity; money may be given to the poor from ostentation or from true charity. The inference, therefore, from the action to the motive is always more or less precarious: it is precarious, in particular, in the case of a growing morality, when the true character of a given rule of conduct is not yet fully recognised, and may be judged differently by different people. Whatever we may think of the ultimate ground of morality, we must all admit that the normal consequences of any rule of conduct are relevant in determining its morality. When we know that certain modes of indulgence are injurious to health, the indulgence proves imprudence; and when we know that any mode of conduct is injurious to our fellows, such conduct proves selfishness. So long as the consequences remain uncertain, the implication as to character depends upon the state of mind of the agent—that is, upon his genuine belief as to the nature of his conduct. Very difficult problems occur when 'material' is not identified with formal morality; when, that is, we as lookers-on are supposed to know that certain conduct is mischievous in fact, but when at the same time the agent may be ignorant, or doubtful, or deluded by some sophistical argument. The criterion, however, of merit seems to be clear, whatever the difficulty of applying it. We assume, in the first place, that the conduct springs from a certain motive; the man gives money from charity or from ostentation, he is tolerant from indifference to truth or from love of truthfulness. His particular action, whatever it may be, is one case of a general rule, which, again, expresses his character in a certain relation. In the next place, this rule coincides or diverges from a given moral code, and the character of which it is a partial expression is or is not virtuous as judged by that code. Hence, again, follows the merit of the action. It is more or less meritorious according to the degree of virtue

implied. Where the moral code is still doubtful, there may of course be many difficulties in deciding the proper inference. But, given the moral standard, we simply have to ask whether the character implied does or does not correspond to that type which spontaneously and invariably obeys the moral law? The more closely it does so the higher the merit, which is, as I have said, nothing but the virtue regarded from a particular point of view.

13. I have already argued that a true moral law can only exist when it includes a definition of character. It is at most an approximate statement of the moral law to say that we should give money to the poor. The man who gives money from ostentation is not really acting morally at all, though, in the particular case, his conduct coincides with that which morality prescribes. His conduct may be regarded as moral so long as we attend only to the external rule; but it is a sham morality which he obeys, for the character indicated is not that which does what really belongs to the best social type, and therefore not that which is prescribed by a tenable moral code. A genuine moral law distinguishes classes of conduct not according to external circumstances, but according to the motives involved; and therefore when the conformity to the law is only external, it is more proper to say that it is not conformity at all. Vanity or avarice may often prompt the actions which are equally commanded by a sense of duty or by genuine love of my neighbours. The question whether such actions are or are not virtuous is only intelligible as a question as to the motives from which they spring. We may or may not be able to answer that question decisively in any particular case, but till it is answered we cannot say how far the conduct is strictly meritorious. The test would be given by placing a man in such a position that the only motives operative are the intrinsic motives to virtue. If he acts rightly when he can have no other motive for action except those which we hold to be virtuous, he is really virtuous; if not, we must suppose that his conformity to the moral law was simply accidental. And this, it may be added, is independent of any hypothesis as to the ultimate nature

of the intrinsically virtuous motive. If there be such a thing as love of virtue for its own sake, the virtuous man must obey the rule when all other motives, including those derived from the happiness of his fellows, make the other way. If, on the other hand, virtue is merely a form of selfishness, it is absurd to suppose that virtue can ever command conduct which is on the whole opposed to the interests of the individual. But on that hypothesis we should consider a man to be intrinsically virtuous, and therefore meritorious, who, though systematically selfish, never allowed immediate interests to overpower a proper attention to his total interests. In any case, his character must be such as to imply invariable obedience to the moral code: or, as we may safely say that no one is virtuous up to this point, we should rather say that he is virtuous or meritorious in proportion as he reaches this ideal standard.

14. We have said, then, that a man's intrinsic merit is not merely proportioned to his virtue, but is his virtue considered under a particular aspect, namely, as causing the moral approval of his fellows, and that the merit of an action means simply his proved virtue, that virtue, namely, which he must possess in order to do the action in question; and, in saying this, we have assumed certain very simple principles, which have nevertheless produced libraries of controversy. We assume, in fact, that merit can only attach to voluntary conduct; for that is the same thing as to say that it attaches to the character. Conduct which does not spring from motives or from character is not, properly speaking, conduct at all. A man is not truly an agent in matters in which he is passive. In the next place, merit, as we have seen, has a reference to a certain assumed standard: a man is more or less meritorious as he is above or below the ordinary standard in respect of virtue. Therefore conduct has positive merit only in so far as it is more or less difficult for the average man. Thirdly, the criterion of merit is that the motive implied should be truly virtuous; that is, that its agent is so far in conformity with the moral type. Now these conditions are frequently expressed by saying that merit implies free-

will, that it implies effort, and that it implies a love of right for the sake of right. A man can have no merit so far as he acts under compulsion, or without difficulty, or from some other motive than a love of virtue. Other conceptions, especially that of 'moral responsibility,' are equally involved in the controversies which have arisen upon these points; but it will be sufficient if I state the bearing of my own theories upon the main points at issue.

## II. *Free-Will*

15. I have already said in a summary way that I reject the free-will theory, so far, at least, and only so far, as it implies a negative of the 'universal postulate' in regard to human conduct. I would willingly pass by the whole controversy with this statement. But it seems necessary to traverse expressly the contention that a 'determinist' must logically be a disbeliever in merit. In one sense, indeed, that contention is admissible. I admit that there can be no question of merit as between man and his Maker. The potter has no right to be angry with his pots. If he wanted them different, he should have made them different. The consistent theologian must choose between the Creator and the Judge. He must abandon the conception of merit or the conception of absolute dependence. The free-will argument, as understood by the school which seriously maintains it, is an illogical attempt to reconcile two conceptions which are radically contradictory by the device of substituting the word 'mystery' for the plainer word 'nonsense.' Admitting the inherent difficulty of the question, I must still admit frankly that to my mind the one insuperable difficulty is the difficulty of reconciling determinism with the ordinary theology. That difficulty, however, ceases to trouble us when we admit (with many theologians) that the ordinary theology is erroneous. If any one denies this, I must be content to refer him to the many metaphysicians who, from the days of Hobbes and Jonathan Edwards, have fully discussed the question. I proceed to argue that not only is determinism consistent with a

belief in merit and moral responsibility, but that it is implied at every step by that belief.

16. Let us start from a particular case. I sign what I know to be a malicious libel. I am, then, a malevolent liar. My conduct proves that I am neither benevolent nor truthful. I deserve blame, and my conduct is de-meritorious. But it is proved that my hand was held by overpowering force. My action, then, was not wrong, or rather it was not my action. My body was employed by somebody else, as my pen was employed. My character, then, had no influence upon the result. I may have been the most truthful and benevolent of men. The moral law applies to my character, and not to the mechanical movements of my limbs when impelled by another man's will. Suppose it now proved that a pistol was held to my head or a bribe offered to me. How am I now to be judged? From the whole operative motive and the total implication as to character. The new motives, fear of death and love of money, are not in themselves bad, for they may be shared by the best of men. The implication as to my malevolence or falseness is not so strong as before, as the new motive counts for something. If the temptation was very great and the injury to my victim very trifling, it may perhaps be thought that my conduct was such as an average man would adopt under the circumstances. If so, I am not thought bad, though I should undoubtedly be better if I had enough courage, sense of honour, and benevolence to resist the temptation. It may be thought that resistance would have required heroic virtue, or possibly that my yielding to a bribe implies a greed which is still more contemptible than malevolence. Hence arise many difficult psychological and moral problems: what is the implication as to character? what is the right morality? and so forth. But the criterion remains the same, namely, what was the quality of the motive indicated, and how far is it indicative of a certain constitution of my character in respect of morality?

17. This is, I think, the argument sanctioned by common sense, and to my mind it is perfectly sound and satisfactory. The principle assumed is simple. I infer motive from con-

duct: so far as other causes do not account for the conduct, my inference stands; so far as other causes are assignable, the inference must be modified accordingly; and the strength of the motive is measured by the resistance which it overcomes. So, in the case suggested, we only infer malevolence in so far as the conduct is determined by the character of the agent, and we infer that degree of malevolence which is necessary to account for the action when the influence of other motives is deducted. I reason precisely as I reason in determining, for example, the motion of a body when I set down, say, to the tension of a particular rope all the share in supporting a given weight which is not otherwise explained. At every step in the process I assume that there is a causal connection between character and conduct, so that I may infer motives from actions, and reciprocally actions from motives. I assume freedom, in the sense of freedom from external force, wherever I assume merit, because the internal force accounts and must account for all that part of the phenomenon for which the external force does not account. Coercion or external force makes motive irrelevant, and therefore annihilates the inference to motive. But the inference would equally break down if I denied this causal relation between action and motive. If, that is, conduct did not imply motive when there was no coercion, I could make no inference as to motive from the fact of freedom. If, therefore, by assuming freedom, I mean to imply that motive does not determine conduct, or that, given the character, the man may either act or abstain from acting, I so far destroy the inference as to virtue and merit. But, upon my assumptions, this is to assume an absurdity, if not a contradiction in terms. It is to destroy the sole postulate in virtue of which reasoning is possible at all, or to make the very essence of reasoning impossible.

18. Let us suppose, in fact, that my inference is uncertain, or, as it is sometimes put, that the agent and all the relevant circumstances being constant, the conduct varies. The same man will in one case give and in another refrain from giving. What is the legitimate inference? Since the action varies,

I infer that some of the conditions must vary. Now in many cases this is apparently an accurate statement of the facts. The same man is liberal at one moment, stingy at another. I infer that his character has varied, and that he has seen one beggar before dinner and another after, or that some accidental association of ideas ('accidental' in the sense that it is due to some combination not dependent either upon his character or the assumed facts) has for the moment modified his disposition. This, of course, is possible upon any hypothesis. So far as this explanation is hypothetic, the merit or the virtue is diminished in proportion to the uncertainty. The man is less liberal than I supposed, for his liberality is limited by a previously unknown condition. He is only liberal when his temper is unruffled, or when he is under the influence of a particular association. But this is not enough for the advocate of free-will, for I have still assumed that some variation of character or circumstance accounts for the varying conduct. He asserts that, all conditions down to the minutest remaining constant, there is still a possibility of variation in conduct. I deny the possibility; but, assuming it for the sake of argument, I deny that the inference is legitimate. If the conduct varies, and if no assignable change of conditions can account for it, I cannot assume the intervention of some inscrutable or unassignable condition which, as independent both of character and circumstances, can only be described in negative terms. We are virtually postulating a blind fatality. Some unknown and unknowable power must have governed the action. But so far as that is the case, all inferences as to merit and virtue are as illegitimate as in the case of external coercion. Whatever determines conduct independently of character so far destroys the moral value of conduct. To say that a man is benevolent means that he will always be benevolent; to say that an action is benevolent means that it proves the man to be benevolent. Whatever diminishes the certainty that a man is benevolent now and will be benevolent hereafter must so far diminish his virtue, and makes the whole theory contradictory. By confounding coercion with internal determination we fall into

endless perplexities; for whereas we must admit that a man is more truthful in proportion as he is certain always to speak the truth, we make it an essential condition of his virtue that it is intrinsically uncertain whether he will speak the truth or lie. Indeed, if free-will be essential, then the more free-will the better, and the smaller the certainty of truth the greater the virtue.

19. The same argument of course applies to the correlative theory of responsibility. A man is responsible for that alone which he can do or leave undone. Obviously so if we mean for that the doing or the not doing of which depends upon his character; for otherwise there is no inference as to character. I am not responsible for dying when my throat is cut, for I shall die equally whether I am a saint or a sinner; but I am responsible for cutting my throat, for I shall not do so (assuming the immorality of suicide) if I am a saint, but only if I am a sinner. If it is urged that, being a saint, I am still free to cut my throat or leave it alone, that is true in the sense in which it is true that, being a saint, I may become a sinner. But the more saintly I am the smaller is the possibility. If a fate called free-will or anything else intervenes, and causes me to cut my throat whilst I am still a saint, I am not the more but the less responsible for an action which does not spring from my character.

20. But, it is said, admitting the relation between character and conduct, it is true that each man can form his own character. Undoubtedly every man is always forming his own character. Every act tends to generate a habit or to modify character, and consciously to form character is an act like any other, and subject to the conditions already stated. Nothing but fresh confusion is introduced by attempting to draw the old distinction upon these lines. We say, for example, that a man is less responsible for licentiousness who has been brought up in a corrupt society. The argument is sound if reasonably interpreted. It is true that a man who is now a drunkard may have been originally as sober as another man who owes his sobriety to the absence of temptations. The moral worth of the two men was originally the same, and the

difference is due to the difference of circumstance. Again, it is true that the whole inference as to character is often very different according to the different mode in which it has been formed. The man who has been seduced to drinking by strong temptations is as much a drunkard as the man who has taken to drink without them, but he has not given the same proof of weakness of character, and may probably be more estimable in other ways. When everybody drank, drunkenness was more consistent with a sense of honour than it now is. Such considerations show the necessity of guiding our judgment by very complex inferences, and show that the merit—in the sense of the proved virtue—of given conduct may vary widely when the particular action alone is given. But it is impossible to make this the ground for a distinction between qualities due to circumstance and others due to the man himself. In all actions, as in the whole of our lives, there is a constant action and reaction between the external and internal conditions. We cannot disentangle them into two separate series of events, any more than we can say whether breathing depends more upon the air or the lungs. Every character is developed under circumstances, and the development depends upon the continuous adjustment of the relations. If we suppose that every man's 'self' is a separate entity of precisely the same qualities, then the difference between the developed characters is due entirely to circumstances, and therefore can have no merit on the free-will theory, or to a mysterious act of choice which is due neither to circumstance nor to a difference—for such difference is supposed not to exist—in the choosing subject. If, again, the difference is due to some distinction between the original selves, we come back to the determinist hypothesis; for this difference is the condition of all subsequent differences, and must be itself due to previous growth, or to the absolute will of the Creator. Or, finally, we come back to the unintelligible theory of 'accident' or 'fatality' as the foundation of merit, though merit is only intelligible as excluding accident.

21. This argument has been so frequently and forcibly stated that further insistence is needless. Identify free-will

with the occurrence of chance, and the conception of merit becomes contradictory and repulsive. Exclude chance, and you are virtually a determinist. From this dilemma I can see no escape, and I am not aware of a plausible answer. The advocates of free-will theories are frequently content to admit the force of the argument, but retort it by suggesting equal difficulties in the opposing theory, and asserting this to be one of the speculations which lead to inevitable antinomies. The practical reason is therefore left to choose the most edifying alternative. Though I am far from admitting this assertion, I think that it is true in this as in many other cases, that each party to the controversy is most effective when assailing the position of its antagonists. I must therefore give my reply to that which I take to be the most telling argument of my opponents. The pith of it seems to be as follows:—Moral responsibility, it is said, implies freedom. A man is only responsible for that which he causes. Now the *causa causæ* is also the *causa causati*. If I am caused as well as cause, the cause of me is the cause of my conduct; I am only a passive link in the chain which transmits the force. Thus, as each individual is the product of something external to himself, his responsibility is really shifted to that something. The universe or the first cause is alone responsible, and since it is responsible to itself alone, responsibility becomes a mere illusion.

22. I admit, of course, the first statement. I am responsible for that, and for that alone, which I cause. But does the fact that I am also 'caused' relieve me of responsibility? This I deny. A man's character is what it is; it makes no difference that, like everything in the universe, it has grown according to assignable laws instead of springing into being miraculously. Certain qualities of character are virtuous, and not the less so because their existence depends upon conditions. The criterion of merit or responsibility is the dependence of conduct upon character, and this remains unaffected so long as the character is the true proximate cause of conduct. A man is not responsible when his hand is another man's tool; he is responsible whenever it is moved

by his will. I do not diminish a man's responsibility when I 'cause' him to act, but only when I cause him to 'act' involuntarily. So far as I know a man's character, and apply the motives which induce him to act, I may be said to cause his conduct, but I do not diminish his responsibility. If I give a man half-a-crown to shoot my enemy, he is not the less a brutal murderer. His responsibility is measured by the guilt of committing murder for half-a-crown. I have only brought out the fact that he is a brute, and of course encouraged the growth of his brutal habits. My guilt in the murder is the same as if I had myself used the gun; his guilt is the same as if his motive had been the plunder of the victim instead of the bribe from me.

23. In this sense conduct may be 'caused' without lessening the agent's responsibility; and this suggests the inquiry which, if fully cleared up, would do more than anything to remove the obscurities of these problems. I can only touch upon it so far as it is relevant to the immediate purpose. What is the meaning of the word 'cause'? We are apt to think of cause and effect as of two separate things, one of which somehow governs or coerces the other. If we carefully restrict ourselves to the necessary implications of the word, and consider the cause as a constituent part of the total process which is called the effect, many illusory associations vanish. Thus, in the familiar phrase, a man is said to be enslaved by his passions, as though he and his passions were separable entities, and he could still be the same man without them. All that can really be meant is that certain instincts are unusually potent; and to say what he would have done without them is to say what a different man would have done. They are not external fetters capable of being removed or added without altering the man, but parts of the man himself. Yet this metaphorical phrase leads to a confusion between strong will and absence of will, and we declare a man incapable of choice just because he chooses so strongly. In the same way we might speak of an assembly as being enslaved by the majority, as though the assembly were an entity separate from the majority; and thus we should confuse a condition

of energetic action with a condition of impotence; such, for example, as one in which the assembly is controlled by a foreign body. So, if we state that a man's conduct is determined by his character, we identify a statement which implies the highest degree of volitional energy with one in which volition has no influence. A lover is a slave to his passion only in the sense that a part of himself prompts him to vigorous activity, and his will is not suspended but intensified. The case exemplifies the obvious absurdity of confounding external with internal coercion, or rather of using such a phrase as internal coercion at all. Self-coercion can only mean determination in the logical sense. Every conceivable object has certain qualities, and we are indulging in a meaningless figure of speech if we speak of the quality as something separate from the thing, and 'forcing' it to act in such and such a way. To say every material body has weight is of course the same thing as to say that it is heavy, and does not imply that weight is like a chain pulling at the body and separable from it; but some such feeling seems to be always creeping in when we speak of the causation of conduct or of character.

24. Let us look at this a little more closely. What is implied in the statements with which we are here concerned? A man is an organism, and may be considered from without as built up of mutually dependent organs, or from within as consisting of certain faculties or instincts. When we say that his conduct is caused by one of those instincts, we do not mean that there is a man *plus* the instinct, but that the whole man, regarded as a unit, including this instinct, acts in a certain way in which a man (if such a man be possible) without the instinct would not act; or, again, if the instinct be an essential part of the man, that the conduct varies according to some variation in this instinct, or, in other words, in the character considered in the corresponding relation. 'The cause of charity is benevolence,' means simply that benevolent men are charitable; malevolent men are not. 'The cause of eating is hunger,' means that a man eats more or less as he is more or less hungry. If, again,

we speak of self-caused conduct, we use words inaccurately, as when we speak of self-coercion ; but the meaning is clear enough. Briefly, we mean that the conduct in question arises from an internal and not from an external variation ; that it depends upon certain organic processes which take place whilst the medium or external set of conditions remains constant. I go to sleep because I am tired, and my fatigue arises from my own activity, not from any change in the surrounding conditions. A certain set of external conditions is always necessary for my existence, and therefore for my existence in any particular state, and I may, if I please, consider them as a 'cause' of my conduct. But the cause is, so to speak, latent. It remains a constant, and therefore is not relevant in determining the particular action which depends immediately upon processes taking place within the sphere of my own organisation. In these cases, then, to speak of my conduct as caused, is clearly not to assert that there is something besides me and my surroundings which coerces me, but simply that I have certain qualities which display themselves in certain ways, and are the manifestation of my character. But we now have to deal with external causes. My conduct at a given moment is determined by my surroundings. I read because a book is present, run away because there is danger, and so forth. Am I therefore, as is sometimes said, the creature of circumstances ? Undoubtedly my conduct depends upon circumstances, but it is just equally true that it depends upon my character. Both factors are essential, and neither at any given moment is simply the product of the other. I am now repeating the same set of intellectual operations as before upon a larger whole. Instead of considering a man as a separate organism, I include the whole set of processes of which he forms a part, and, as before, there is a mutual dependence, and no one part is to be regarded more than another as determining or creating the other part. If, in fact, I could analyse the whole universe (so far as is necessary for the problem under consideration) into its constituent factors, one of these factors would be the agent with certain qualities. If the surroundings are all known, I can

infer various conditions by which the agent is limited, but there would still remain an indeterminate factor, namely, the character of the man himself. So, again, given the man, I could infer a great part of the surroundings, namely, all the conditions necessary for his existence in his actual state. This merely states that wherever there is a complex whole with mutually dependent parts, I can, so far as my knowledge goes, infer either the parts from the whole or one part from another; but it does not imply that besides all the constituent parts there is a something else corresponding to a coercive force. And this is equally true if I go back to what is called the historical cause. The universe is a continuous system; no abrupt changes suddenly take place. We could not suppose them to take place without supposing that identical processes might suddenly become different, which is like supposing that a straight line may be produced in two different directions. Hence every agent is a continuation of some preceding process. He has not suddenly sprung into existence from nowhere in particular; the man has grown out of the child. We might (though the language would be somewhat strained) call the child in this sense the 'cause' of the man. But for the child the man would not exist. But there is not a child *plus* a man, in which case there might be a coercion of the man by the child. The child and man form a continuous whole, with properties slowly varying according to its character and the external circumstances. A man, again, has of course qualities which he has inherited; but this is not to be understood as if there were a man *plus* inherited qualities, which, therefore, somehow diminish his responsibility. The whole man is inherited, if we may use such a phrase. He starts at his birth with qualities dependent of course upon the qualities of his parents, for their characteristics and condition are the sole relevant conditions. The fact that he inherits a particular temper no more implies that he is one thing and the temper another thing superimposed, than the fact that he inherits the general characteristics of humanity would imply that the man is something in addition to all his essential qualities. From the child, again, we may (within certain limits) infer the man.

It is equally true that from the man we may infer the child. It is true that the man must have certain qualities which he would not have had the child been different, and it is equally true that the child must have had certain qualities which he would not have had if the man were different. In both cases we are looking at a continuous process from varying points, and we can infer either backwards or forwards. The latter attitude is more customary, owing to the conditions of human conduct. But it is not implied that something survives from the earlier stage which is additional to, and capable therefore of limiting or coercing, the later stage. Our power of inferring simply expresses the fact of continuity and nothing more; and I may observe in passing that, even if we denied this axiom, and supposed that men could spring into existence out of nothing, it is impossible to see how their 'responsibility' or 'free-will' would be affected.

25. The whole illusion in this part of the question seems to rest upon a simple principle. Philosophers tell us (and with undeniable truth) that 'chance' is a mere name for ignorance. It is a chance whether a penny will fall heads or tails uppermost; that is, we do not know which way it will fall. I say equally when I am crossing a mountain that it is a chance whether the other side of a ridge is a precipice or a slope. In this case, then, I assert nothing as to the thing itself, for that is already there—there is already either a precipice or a slope—but only assert that I do not know which. And this, which is admittedly true of chance, is equally true of the necessity which is the negation of chance. It is simply a name for certainty, as chance for absence of certainty. Thus, if I say you will 'necessarily' act in such a way, I mean that I know that you will act in that way, and I mean nothing more. My knowledge may be founded upon a knowledge of your character, and upon a knowledge of certain physical limitations which make your character irrelevant. In this sense, conduct or action dependent upon character can rarely be certain or 'necessary' beyond a certain point, because we have rarely any accurate knowledge of character. The data are more complex, but

they are not in themselves less determinate. An indeterminate thing is a non-existent thing, for it would be something which is at once one thing and another thing. The same applies to all such words as 'necessary,' 'probable,' 'potential,' 'possible,' and so forth. They are simply names of the observer's state of mind, which, by one of the most familiar of all fallacies, are supposed to denote qualities of the thing observed. What I see to exist 'necessarily' may be only probable for you, but the thing itself either exists or does not exist, and by saying 'necessary' I add nothing except a statement as to my knowledge. The use of the word 'necessary' in regard to conduct has given offence from this common confusion of ideas. If I say, for example, that a man will necessarily commit murder under given circumstances, I mean that I am quite certain that he will. Why am I certain? Because I know him to have the murderous character. I do not assert the existence of a necessity as of something external to his character, which will make him commit murder whether he likes it or not, but simply that I know that he will like it. And thus the only meaning of the necessity of conduct is that people have fixed qualities of character, which do, as a matter of fact (not determine their conduct from without), but manifest themselves in conduct; in other words, that people have characters. If they have not, I do not see how they can be virtuous, and meritorious, and responsible.

26. Finally, let us return to the *causa causæ* argument. The statement is, that if action is caused, the original cause alone can be responsible. If this is interpreted by the hypothesis of a Creator separate from the universe, who has yet moulded it as the seal moulds the wax, and who at every instant sustains and supports it, I admit that it is impossible to conceive of responsibility to such a being. It is the case of a man bribing me to a crime and then punishing me for committing it. I may be equally responsible, as I have said, to others, but I do not see how I can be responsible to him. But the bare fact that an omniscient, or even a highly intelligent being could foresee my actions with certainty, would

not destroy my responsibility. Such foreknowledge, it used to be argued, implied predestination, and therefore an incapacity of the individual to act otherwise. But the determination implied would not be an external fate coercing the character, but simply the character itself. I know that a man will remain motionless, not because I know him to be in fetters, but because I know that he is indolent. In one case, I should infer that he will be motionless whatever his character; in the other, that he will be motionless, assuming his character. The two cases are really mutually exclusive, though they are so often confounded. Prediction, in short, does not imply a man *plus* a fate, but a man alone.

27. I am not, however, properly concerned with the so-called transcendental causes. Within the sphere of scientific thought, the case is as I have argued it. A man is responsible, I have said, for those actions which are caused by his moral character. The fact that he is himself 'caused,' or that his actions are caused by circumstances, is only relevant in so far as this statement means that his character ceases to be a cause at all; in other words, the same phenomena would result whatever his character might be. If my benevolence causes my action, if, that is, a person not benevolent would act differently, then I have the merit of benevolence. The fact that my action depends upon circumstances—that is, would be different if circumstances differed—is irrelevant if it also depends upon my character. My character is still a true cause. The fact that my character has been developed under the action of circumstances is equally irrelevant so long as it is my character. The two factors are implied at every stage of the process, and the so-called 'dependence' of one upon the other means simply that I cannot infer the whole phenomenon from either taken separately. Finally, if I refer to the origin or the historical cause of my character, it is of course true that the man's character would be different if the character of the child's character had been different, or the child's if the parents' had been different. If the child had certain instincts, the man will have corresponding instincts; as also if the parents were monkeys instead of men, the child

would be a monkey. But there are not separate qualities which are left behind by the parents or the child to hamper the man; the whole of the man's qualities are continuous with the qualities existing in any previous stage of the same person. There is not a common something which becomes either monkey or man as a different form is imposed upon it. If we could suppose a sudden appearance of the man out of nothing or by the fiat of a Creator, we should still only shift the responsibility to the Creator or to chance. We may infer the child from the man as well as the man from the child, and there is no more necessity in the one case than the other, except in the sense which means certainty. When we know from one phenomenon that another exists, it is simply that we can (for some reason) identify the two as parts of a whole of mutually dependent parts. From an eye we infer an ear or a leg; it is not because the eye has a power to make ears and legs out of formless matter, or because, besides eyes and ears and legs and every part of the organism, there is some additional coercive force which holds them together, but simply that each part carries with it a reference to the rest. The difficulty is dispelled so far as it can be dispelled when we have got rid of the troublesome conception of necessity as a name for something more than the certainty of the observer. When we firmly grasp and push to its legitimate consequences the truth that probability, chance, necessity, determination, and so forth, are simply names of our own states of mind, or, in other words, have only a subjective validity; that a thing either exists or does not exist, and that no fresh quality is predicated when we say that it exists necessarily; and that all dependence of one thing upon another implies a mutual relation and not an abolition of one of the things—we have got as far as we can towards removing the perplexity now under consideration. But it is not likely to disappear to-day or to-morrow.

### III. *Effort*

28. I pass, therefore, to a further condition of morality, which involves some similar ambiguities. The free-will con-

dition implies (upon my view) a misunderstanding of the undeniable proposition that a man can be virtuous or meritorious in respect of those actions alone which are conditioned by his character, or which are really his actions. The agent must be really an agent, not a bit of mechanism, or a transmitter of internal force. But, in the next place, as I have said, the qualities in respect of which a man is meritorious must be those which are amenable to discipline. The moralised man is the trained savage; he helps a stranger instead of attacking him; and this modified instinct which he has acquired through the social factor distinguishes him from the immoral man, in whom the instinct is deficient. Thus, again, it seems that merit implies an effort. Those actions, I have said, are regarded as meritorious which the average man would not do without extrinsic reward, and that character is meritorious which implies the modification necessary to such conduct. Hence, again, it is often said, with more or less propriety, that a man deserves nothing for conduct which is pleasant or purely 'natural.' As these statements involve various perplexities, I must seek to give at least the clue by which they may be unravelled.

29. I observe, then, that (as already stated) a judgment of merit implies reference to some standard; and this implies, again, that the person is supposed to belong to a certain class, and to have the essential properties of that class. When I say 'a good' or 'a bad' man, I of course use the words in a different sense from those in which I should speak of a good or bad horse. I mean that the man is better or worse than the average man, and I take for granted that he has all the qualities essential to humanity. This already involves one ambiguity, for it becomes a question how far certain qualities which may be absent should put a man outside the class to which we are in all cases making a tacit reference. What are the characteristics, one might ask, which bring a man within the sphere of morality? It is not 'fair,' we often say, to judge a man in one age by the moral standard of another age. It is not fair to judge a man exposed to temptation by the standard applicable to one who is not tempted. And with

these difficulties may be classed the more practical difficulties which so frequently occur in criminal law, when we have to decide how far a child or a madman can be considered as responsible for his actions. The difficulty results to a great extent from a confusion between different classes of questions. When we speak of the merit of an action, we really speak, as I have said, of the qualities which it implies. If we have solved that question, which may be one of extreme difficulty, we have next to ask how far and in what way the man who has those qualities differs from the moral man, and how far, therefore, they imply morality or the reverse? Keeping these problems apart, we shall see, I think, that though they involve great difficulties of application, the governing principle is sufficiently clear.

30. A man tortures a prisoner, but torture is not condemned by the morality of the time. Is the torturer wicked? Clearly not wicked according to one standard, and clearly wicked according to ours. Which standard should we apply? That, I should say, depends upon the problem which we are considering. He is not proved to be a bad man according to the morality of the day. The action, therefore, does not imply the same degree of cruelty which would be implied by a similar action now. We should not be justified in inferring that he was cruel in other relations of life, as we should now be justified in a similar inference. Suppose that we have made our inferences correctly, and discovered that the man was up to the average standard of his time, our judgment is complete. He was not in advance of his time, and we do not respect him so much as we should respect one who was in advance. He is not so good a man, again, as a man who is up to an improved moral standard; that is, he is not so uniformly merciful or benevolent. Possibly his innate qualities were as good; and had he been born under the improved standard, he would have been as good. That, as it seems to me, is all that we can say. 'Merit' does not mean a separable quality which is the same at all periods, but carries with it a statement of relation to a varying standard, and therefore cannot be definitely valued apart from the circumstances

without a sophistry. Each of the two men, we must reply, is equally good, measured by his own standard; their innate qualities may have been equally good also; but one man is absolutely better in so far as he represents a more advanced type of humanity. We cannot sum up these various statements by a single statement about 'merit.' That can only be done satisfactorily when we assume that both agents belong to the same class, and are to be judged by a single standard. We fall into the same kind of perplexity as if we were to compare the wealth of a man of to-day with the wealth of his ancestor. We may compare the amount of gold which each man possesses, or the amount of actual enjoyment which it purchases, or the position in the society which it confers; but to answer definitely the question which is involved, we must distinguish the sense in which the question is asked. Then the ambiguity disappears, though the difficulty of answering may be immense.

31. The question is more perplexing when we have to do with cases such as the child or the madman, when the individual has qualities (or an absence of qualities) which seem to take him out of the class. But the same mode of answering applies equally. Thus, for example, children and some adults are without the passions which are regulated by one important part of the moral law. What are we to think of them? Simply this, that they are without these passions. If, then, they refrain from certain vices, their abstinence does not prove chastity. It simply shows that in respect of this quality they are neutral, neither good nor bad. It would be a clear mistake in logic to identify the case of the man who has certain passions under control and the man who has not the passions at all. But a man is neither moral nor immoral in so far as he has the passions, for in themselves they are neither good nor bad. The man who has them not will indeed be so far disqualified for certain social relations, as, on the other hand, he will be free from certain temptations. The ordinary inferences as to character, and therefore our judgment of his virtue or merit, will be fallacious. But he will still have a character, which may be either virtuous or

the reverse in the highest degree in all other respects, and we shall judge him, if we judge rightly, according to the conformity of his character to the type, so far as it goes. He cannot be a perfect man in the full sense, for he is without qualities which are essential to the race, but then the defect is not such as to imply any moral defect in any of the relations which he is capable of fulfilling. It would therefore be absurd to call him either moral or immoral in respect of this defect. We can only say that he is defective, but that the defect is morally neutral. There may be a liability to error in our ordinary inferences as to the facts of character, and, when the facts are known, in saying what degree of deflection is implied; but the principle seems to be simple.

32. Thus, again, we have the case of the madman, with all the ever-recurring difficulties of deciding what is meant by madness. It is agreed, of course, that a madman is not responsible so far as he is under actual illusions, and supposes himself to be beheading a cabbage when he is really killing a man. The test and the ordinary inferences as to character would fail. But madness shades into sanity by imperceptible degrees, and we are asked to pronounce a moral judgment upon such cases as that of the 'homicidal mania.' A madman, it is suggested, is not responsible, because he cannot help it or has lost his free-will; the sane man can help himself, and is therefore responsible. As I consider free-will to be an illusion, I cannot accept this theory, nor can I see why the madman should be supposed to be without it. The more unaccountable a man's actions, the more one would be inclined to admit the presence of some arbitrary agent. A man who possessed free-will in a large degree, whose actions obeyed no assignable rule, would certainly appear to be mad. The argument, however, points to the obvious explanation. No one would consider a man to be less responsible for a murder in proportion to the strength of his malice. The more malicious he is, the more certain he is to commit murder; the less is his malice restrainable by fear, or conscience, or any other motive; and therefore, in the judgment of every man, the

greater is the crime. We hold the madman to be not responsible for precisely the oppposite reason, namely, that in him murder does not imply malice, but some different impulse; he is not accessible to the ordinary motives. 'Homicidal mania,' if used simply to imply a high degree of cruelty or malice, would not take the sufferer out of the ordinary moral code; it can only do so when it means that his mental machinery is out of gear, so that the ordinary motives do not have their normal effect. His mind, we say, is deranged. He deviates from the type, not as a man deviates in whom certain passions are unusually strong, but by some undefined and undefinable organic difference, which prevents him from being amenable to the natural motives. Murder is in him not the manifestation of malice, but a proof that his brain is in an abnormal condition, due perhaps to an accident or to some obscure constitutional defect entirely unconnected with his moral character, and therefore not justifying the ordinary inference. This, as it seems to me, is more or less explicitly assumed in all cases of madness. We do not call a man mad unless we assume a deflection in his psychological organisation from that of the type which prevents him from being amenable to the moral motives, and such a deflection as implies disease and a disintegration of the faculties necessary for a due discharge of the vital functions. The difficulty of saying in a given case what constitutes this deflection is enormous; but in any case we do not judge that the actions of the sane man are independent of motives whilst those of the madman are dependent, but that whilst both have motives, the madman's motives are 'irrational' or abnormal.

33. The perplexity which thus intrudes itself into our conceptions of merit is a difficulty in judging of facts. What character does a given action imply? What is the value of a given character? What is the class to which a man is to be referred, and how far should our judgment be affected by his passions or qualities which distinguish him from other members of the class? All such questions are very difficult in themselves, and in our rough daily estimates of merit we have to solve them after a very summary fashion, and often with very

inconsistent results. We apply one measure of merit in particular, which, though perfectly rational in itself, has led to various perplexities. Conduct, I have said, is meritorious so far as it proves merit; it can only prove merit so far as it implies difficulty for the average man. Leonidas was as brave before Thermopylæ as after; he was only known to be brave when he had proved his courage by accepting a fate from which cowards shrank. Hence, it is argued, merit only accrues in respect of difficult performance; whilst again it is said the greater the difficulty the greater the merit, and thus that whatever a man does simply to please himself is no credit to him.

34. The fallacy which is sometimes involved in this statement is too simple to require a long examination; the full statement of the case is enough to expose it. The man is most meritorious who has most virtue; consequently, if we assume that a certain task has to be performed, the man who performs it most easily is the most virtuous. Leonidas was braver in proportion as he had no tendency to run away; I am honester in proportion as I feel less disposition to pocket my neighbour's spoons. A man who felt no disposition whatever to commit any sin would so far be absolutely perfect, and such a character is attributed by Christians to a divine man. Christ was not the less perfect if he never felt the least velleity to do wrong; on the contrary, such a character represents the unattainable moral ideal. For the same reason it is true that, if we suppose the task to increase in difficulty, the man is most honest who overcomes the greatest difficulty—that is, the greatest difficulty for a given strength. The less the difficulty for him, the greater the difficulty which he can overcome. The greater the danger, the greater the bravery; the heavier the bribe offered, the greater the honesty displayed in resisting it, and so forth. The principle is precisely the same as in the case of a mechanical exertion; the man is the strongest who can lift the heaviest weight, or who can lift a given weight with the greatest ease. But (and it is a proof of the loose argument which has often been accepted in ethical disputes) the two cases have some-

times been confounded. It would plainly be absurd to say, 'The man is strongest who lifts the greatest weight; therefore the man who makes the greatest effort; therefore the man who makes the greatest struggle to lift a given weight.' But it has occasionally been said that the man is most virtuous who resists the greatest temptation; therefore the man who has the greatest struggle; therefore the man who has the greatest difficulty in resisting a given temptation. Though the fallacy does not occur in this bare form, it is not unfrequently implied in the assumption that the effort, taken absolutely, is the measure of merit; we are occasionally tempted, that is, to confound the difficulty which arises from an extrinsic or morally neutral motive with that which arises from the moral (or immoral) impulse itself. We are thus led to excuse a man for the very qualities which make him wicked. True he committed a murder, but he was so spiteful that he could not help it; or he was exceedingly kind, but he is so good-natured that it cost him no effort. Obviously such reasoning is absurd, but it suggests the necessity of guarding our statement.

35. The man, I have said, is most virtuous who performs a given virtuous act with the least effort; but on looking closer, we see that this statement might lead to the misunderstanding already explained. We might argue, in fact, that temperance showed greater virtue, when, in truth, it merely shows a defect in some faculty of enjoyment. If a man resists any inducement because it has no charms for him, his act does not prove virtue, unless the inducement be such as to appeal only to the wicked. Our formula really involves an assumption which must be explicitly stated. The man is most meritorious who is virtuous with least effort, provided always that he has the normal passions of a man. We virtually assume as the basis of our comparisons that two men are constituted in the same way so far as their moral qualities are not involved; that each of them is equally sensitive to certain modes of enjoyment so long as the enjoyment is not opposed by any moral motive. Then we say, and are justified in saying, that the man is most virtuous who is so constituted

that virtuous conduct is easiest to him. If, for example, two men enjoy the taste of wine equally, the man is most temperate to whom abstinence from excessive use of wine costs the least exertion. But if one man abstains because he dislikes wine, we cannot argue as to his moral superiority; for, in the first place, his abstinence in that case affords no presumption that he will refrain in other cases; and, in the next place, a man is so far the worse as he is wanting in any capacity not intrinsically bad. A taste for wine exposes a man to certain temptations, but it is also presumably a symptom of certain organic advantages which make him so far a more effective being than the man in whom it is deficient.

36. This brings us to a very important point. The inference from a particular act is always precarious, and part of our perplexity arises from deciding what is or is not implied in any given line of conduct. Conduct, which is the same so far as the external circumstances are concerned, may be a manifestation of very different qualities of character accidentally coinciding upon this particular point. The man with strong but disciplined passions may act in the same way upon a given occasion as the man without passions, though he would on other occasions act differently. Hence the 'merit' of the action is indeterminate, inasmuch as it may result from different motives. Putting this aside, or assuming the motive to be ascertained, we have therefore a further question of facts. We may ask, in fact, whether the primitive instincts of which a man's nature is composed are to be regarded as morally indifferent, or whether there are various primitive instincts, some of which are morally good, whilst others are morally bad? In the latter case, the suppression of a bad instinct would of course imply a higher pitch of virtue; and this doctrine seems to be assumed in ascetic systems, and is sometimes even pushed to the degree of maintaining (in words at least) that all the natural instincts are bad. It would be superfluous for me to assign the grounds upon which I reject this theory. The whole doctrine of evolution seems to imply that absolutely pernicious instincts are eliminated in the struggle for existence, and to fall in with the other assumption

that virtue implies a certain organisation of the instincts, and not the extirpation of any existing instincts. Assuming this for the present, the inference as to the particular question before us seems to be simple.

37. Every new sensibility or faculty is so far an advantage to the agent. A man is a completer being or at a higher stage of development in so far as he has acquired any faculty not shared by his fellows. (I assume, of course, that it also implies a total increase of power.) Again, every such faculty, so far as it is morally indifferent, exposes its possessor to fresh temptations, as well as gives him fresh capacities for virtue. Cultivated tastes often encourage indolence, as they also enable us to confer fresh services upon our fellows. If even a sensual appetite, such as a love of wine, exposes a man to temptation, it also helps materially to save him from a sour and unsociable temper. A man so far as he possesses greater faculties is not necessarily more moral or less moral; he is only capable of a more extensive virtue or a wider deviation from virtue. He is moral in the highest sense when he possesses the most richly endowed nature, and when it is also so disciplined that he—that is, when his instincts—are so correlated and organised that he spontaneously obeys the moral law. To be defective in any faculty is to be on a lower platform, and to come under the moral law at a smaller number of points. An action which proves such a defect proves nothing as to the morality of the agent in the cases where morality is possible for him. But it is also true, of course, that such a defect saves a man from certain temptations, as it also removes some opportunities for moral excellence. He is without a faculty which may lead him into moral ruin, as, if properly disciplined, it may enrich and strengthen his morality.

38. Hence, therefore, we may say that, in one sense, effort is essential to merit. A man, that is, must possess the 'natural' instincts in order to become a proper subject for morality at all. If he possess them in any given degree, he is the more moral in proportion as they are so disciplined that moral action is easy for him. But inasmuch as the instincts

are themselves neutral, this always implies a certain accessibility to temptation, and therefore a certain struggle. He cannot be properly temperate unless he is capable of enjoying the pleasures which tempt to excess. If he has no such capacity, he is not in this respect a moral agent at all. So far therefore as the effort is taken as a symptom that he is accessible to the temptation, it is certainly essential to virtue. But assuming a certain strength of the appetites, the more virtuous he is, the less will be the effort in a given case, for the more thoroughly they will be harmonised and disciplined. No human being, we may add, can be absolutely or infinitely virtuous. Every motive in a finite being must have a finite strength. We may therefore say with the cynic that every man has his price. Some conceivable strength of temptation would overpower any human virtue. Thus a capacity for sinning is implied in a capacity for doing right, for both imply the existence of passions which may be enlisted on either side of the struggle. We may even say in this sense that the more a man is capable of sinning, the more he is capable of virtue, for the virtuous and the vicious character are different modifications of the same primitive instincts, and the man is on a higher stage the more they are developed. But given the instincts, the temptation to sin and the disposition to sin can no more prove a man to be virtuous than the actual sin.

## IV. *Knowledge*

39. This brings us to the third consideration. The doctrine that virtue implies effort is associated with the doctrine that the primary instincts are either corrupt or neutral. Some theological systems, starting from the dogma of the corruption of human nature, are logically drawn to the conclusion that virtue represents a supernatural influence governing and subduing the natural instincts. The philosopher who rejects this dogma and denies the validity of this division between the natural and the supernatural so far admits the method as to assign to reason the functions of divine grace. Reason thus dominates and controls the passions, though they are not

regarded as positively bad, but rather as neutral or morally indifferent. So far as a man acts from instinct he acts 'irrationally,' and therefore not morally. Every instinct, as I have said, may be the ally or the opponent of the moral motives. A mother's love makes her sacrifice herself to her children, but it may also lead her to cruelty to others for their good. It is only virtuous, then, or meritorious, in so far as it implies a love of virtue and a principle of action which will guide her when her passions are on the wrong side. Conduct, it is inferred, is truly virtuous when, and only when, the action is done because it is virtuous. The motive must be the pure love of virtue or of virtue for its own sake. Otherwise, since conduct dictated by the emotions alone is morally neutral, or even, as it is sometimes said, arbitrary, it cannot be regarded as properly speaking virtuous.

40. The principle involved in this reasoning is implied in all that I have said. To say that an action is virtuous is to say that it is a manifestation of a virtuous character. It is perfectly true therefore that we cannot infer virtue from an action which springs from a motive common to all men or to all animals, such as hunger or fear. An action which only proves that a man has an appetite or dislikes pain does not prove him to be either good or bad. A man's virtue or intrinsic merit depends upon his whole character, and his character is a complex of many instincts connected by laws inscrutable to our imperfect methods, and acting and reacting in a vast variety of most delicate and intricate ways. The question as to virtue or merit is the question as to whether the whole character does or does not imply action in conformity with the moral law. The question, then, may be asked, how far such conformity is possible without an explicit recognition of the law. If it is possible for a man to act as the law directs without so acting because the law directs, then his conduct is said to be 'materially' but not 'formally' moral. Now there can be no *a priori* objection to such a conformity. It is not true (as some language seems to imply) that conduct dictated by instinct or emotion is arbitrary. Nothing is arbitrary. Every instinct

has its own law, though it may not consciously recognise the law. And though each instinct, taken separately, may be morally indifferent, it does not follow that the complex character built up of those instincts is morally indifferent. An instinct is not a separate entity, but expresses the reaction of the whole character under a special stimulus ; and the whole must have laws of its own, which express more or less approximation to, or deviation from, the moral type. How far that conformity involves an explicit recognition of the law is a question of facts, of great complexity doubtless, upon which a few words must here be sufficient.

41. It is clear, in the first place, that reason is in some sense essential to virtue. I deny the possibility of separating the reason from the feelings as two distinct faculties, and hold, on the contrary, that in every act of an intelligent being both reason and emotion are necessarily involved. Morality proper becomes possible at the point at which sympathy is possible ; and sympathy involves reason, for it involves the recognition of other centres of consciousness. The germs of morality may be present at an earlier stage, but the germ is not the developed product. The moral law, again, involves the knowledge of many facts, and often of very complex facts. Cruelty and kindness cannot emerge until we recognise the existence of other sentient beings, nor truthfulness or justice till we can understand general rules, nor chastity and temperance till we can distinguish between the cases of legitimate and illegitimate indulgence. The growth of any of the social relationships, of the state or the family, imposes obligations which cannot be appreciated until those relationships are intelligible ; and in the higher stages of life this involves very complex conceptions. Every development of intelligence implies an extension of the emotional range, and consequently of the sphere of duty. Conversely, every extension of the moral code implies a development both of intelligence and feeling. A man who could feel without thinking or think without feeling is an inconceivable being, and we have no more to do with him than an ordinary geometer with space of four dimensions.

42. Consistently with this, it still remains true that a man may (and indeed must) act regularly though he does not act by rule ; or again, that he may act in conformity with a moral rule without an explicit regard to its moral character. He may become aware that, in fact, it expresses his character, though he has not referred to it as the reason of his actions. The moral law is the ' objective ' law of his conduct, but not the ' subjective ' law or ' reason.' I eat when I am hungry ; so far I act temperately, though I may not think of the rule. I help a man in distress because distress always affects me, though I never think of the general principle ; and so far I am charitable without recognising the duty of charity. The more spontaneous the kindly feeling the less the need for reference to a moral rule ; and accordingly we regard a man with some suspicion who has always to remind himself of the moral obligation in order that he may do what others do spontaneously. This indeed follows if we regard morality as the product of a character which allows the various instincts to operate in their proper places instead of superseding them by some different faculty, and it suggests the answer to our difficulty. Maternal love, it is said, is not virtuous so far as it is a mere natural instinct. This (upon our hypothesis) means that it is not virtuous because it is consistent with many bad qualities and may prompt to injustice on behalf of the children ; but no one can deny that it is so far virtuous that it is implied in a virtuous character. We should condemn a mother in whom it was deficient, and condemn her expressly on the ground that she would be ' wanting in natural feeling.' The feeling does not constitute positive merit, because it is assumed in the average standard ; but for the same reason its absence is a positive demerit, or a conclusive proof of inferiority to the moral type. The mother who had no affection for her child would be so far a bad woman ; she would be without the emotions which are the very groundwork of all the virtues. It is of course true that the affection is not sufficient by itself to make her virtuous, and that even then, in many cases, it may lead her astray. Still it is essential to virtue,

and, in the vast majority of cases, favourable to virtue; whilst, in the rare cases in which it leads to wrongdoing, it may be held in check by other sympathetic feelings which spring from the same root without any conscious reference to a moral law. It is true that so long as that conscious reference is absent we are without the full guarantee for a regular observance of the moral law. A recognition of that law is, on every hypothesis, the crown and final outcome of the moralised character; but a close approximation to morality may exist previously just because it is a product and not a precedent condition. If this be the true state of the case, or an approximation to it, if morality may exist in fact without a previous reference to the moral law, we are quarrelling over words if we deny the name 'virtuous' to such characters.

43. What is true of the maternal affections is true of all the instincts by which conduct is determined. A man is virtuous, not so far as he is without passions, nor so far as they are dominated by some external force, but so far as they constitute a harmonised whole, determining the approximation of character to the best social type. The main and essential condition of morality is the altruism which enables a man to appropriate the feelings of others and so to acquire instincts with a reference to the social good. That quality, which is not a separate organ, but an inseparable incident of the development of the reasoning and feeling agent, supplies the necessary leverage upon which the social sentiments operate. Its bare existence, even in a high degree, does not suffice to make a man thoroughly moral, but it capacitates him for morality and renders immorality proportionately difficult. A man is moral because and in so far as his instincts are correlated according to a certain type. He cannot become thoroughly moral, especially in a society in which the moral law has been distinctly formulated, without becoming conscious of the law of his own action, and the recognition becomes of great importance as a guide for his conduct in cases where, without such a rule, he might fail to perceive the true nature of his conduct. He may be brave, temperate, and

truthful without ever reflecting upon the law which commands the corresponding actions; his sympathies may be so strong as to guard him against most kinds of wrongdoing; and if so I should certainly call him virtuous, though he should never think of right and wrong as such, but be always guided by his immediate feelings. Undoubtedly such a man would still be defective, as a man would be defective who trusted to his immediate perceptions for the knowledge that two sides of a triangle were greater than the third in every particular case, instead of recognising the general principle. But upon my theory, the recognition of the general rule follows from the specific intuitions instead of preceding them. Upon a different philosophical theory the facts would be differently expressed. Meanwhile I can only say that, upon my showing, it is simply a question of fact how far the actual observance of the law involves a recognition of the law, and one which cannot be solved by *a priori* considerations.

44. This brings us to the question which must be more fully considered in the next chapter, What is the nature of conscience, or the intrinsic motives to right-doing? The question is obviously of the highest importance, and the answer to it will clench this part of the inquiry. At present I have only tried to show that, whatever it might be, intrinsic merit is properly a name for the virtuous character considered in a special relation, and that the perplexities arise in great measure from a confusion between merit in this sense and that merely relative merit which means not the actual virtue, but the virtue proved by any given action; or, again, between the qualities considered in themselves and the estimate placed upon them at different periods. Clearing away these difficulties, there remain difficulties which I have considered, and of which I need only remark, in conclusion, that they are all more or less associated with the familiar illusion sanctioned by the double sense of the word 'law.' A scientific law, as has been so often said, is nothing but a generalised statement of facts; but, in spite of all that has been said, it is difficult to avoid the impression that it corresponds in some way to an

external something impressed upon the facts. In this way true if not self-evident statements lead to inextricable labyrinths of confusion. If we speak of a man's character as obeying a law, we mean only that he has a fixed character. We are taken to mean that besides this character there is a law which governs the character, and thus external coercion is confounded with internal determination, and freedom, in the sense of freedom of the character from itself as well as freedom from an outward restraint, is made a condition of moral conduct. Again, if we take the rule as a something forced upon a set of bad or neutral instincts, we assume that an effort corresponding to this process is essential to virtue. Virtue is not simply the expression of a certain harmony between the instincts, but a constraining power opposed to instinct and emotion in general. And so, finally, this abstraction becomes the sole principle of virtuous conduct, and virtue is only possible in so far as it is recognised. Thus, according to my theory, the various conditions of merit which we have been considering are distortions of some perfectly simple principles. The simple fact is, that when we speak of a man's conduct as virtuous, we assume that it is really conduct—that is, really determined by his character ; that it is the conduct of a real man, that is, of one who has the normal instincts, appetites, and emotions ; and really virtuous, that is, the manifestation of a character which conforms to the type and implies a uniform obedience to the law. This is distorted into the assumption that a man must be free, not only from outward restraint, but from his own character ; that his feelings must not only be regulated by each other, but entirely suppressed by some external power ; and, finally, that he must not only act rationally, but act from abstract principles of reason instead of regulated emotion.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CONSCIENCE

#### I. *Theories of Conscience*

1. Having thus attempted to clear away the ambiguities connected with the word 'merit,' and to show that merit means simply the value set upon virtue, we have still to ask, What is the quality valued? A man, I have said, can only be virtuous when he obeys the moral law 'spontaneously,' 'unconditionally,' or from the intrinsic motives implied in the law itself. A man gives money to the poor; is he charitable? The question can only be answered if I know the motive, or, which is the same thing, know how the man will act when circumstances vary. If he acts from direct sympathy, he is charitable; if from ostentation, he is only acting from a desire of praise. His action conforms externally in this particular case to the rule which would be dictated by charity, but it is not therefore charitable. The truly charitable man would give wherever he could relieve distress, whether he received praise or failed to receive it; the ostentatious man would do whatever gained praise, whether his action did or did not relieve his neighbour. If we make a similar statement in regard to virtuous conduct generally, we must say that a man is truly virtuous only when he acts from an intrinsically virtuous motive—when his action is therefore a guarantee that he will always be virtuous, or when the simple fact that conduct of a certain kind is commanded by the moral law is a sufficient motive with him for adopting that mode of conduct.

2. What, then, is the intrinsic motive to virtue? Various explanations may be adopted according to our moral theory. In any case, it may be admitted that conduct is only virtuous

in so far as it is the manifestation of a truly virtuous character—that is, of a character such that the agent will always act in conformity to the moral law. Obedience to a law is sometimes explained most simply from the analogy of the positive law as implying respect for some external authority. The motive, then, common to all virtuous conduct is the motive (whatever it may be) which prompts obedience to this rule. With theological utilitarians, for example, it is taken to be the fear of supernatural penalties. The difficulty which then occurs is that the motive appears to be extrinsic; it is fear of a god or devil which makes us moral; and though we may say that, as a fact, the Deity affixes penalties to conduct of a certain kind, the connection seems to be arbitrary. We cannot say why this or that particular kind of conduct should be punished or rewarded, and morality is thus explained by explaining it away. This, again, may be avoided by saying, with the ordinary utilitarians, that morality means that conduct which produces a maximum of happiness. The difficulty presents itself that the test seems to put all kinds of happiness on a level, and therefore to afford no apparent means of explaining the specific feeling attached to moral conduct, or the difference between the propositions 'This is right' and 'This is useful.' Another answer is therefore adopted, and we are told that the essential motive to morality is not the fear of a deity simply, but the fear of a good deity, or that there is a specific feeling, different from all others, to which we give the name of Conscience, and which supplies its own credentials. The obvious difficulty is that such an explanation explains nothing. We cannot tell what a good deity will approve unless we know what is meant by goodness; and if goodness is explained to us by a faculty of which it is the sole function to declare what is good, we fall into a vicious circle. Another answer is, therefore, to say that the law gives its own authority in the same sense as a logical proposition; it is binding because reasonable; we cannot deny its validity without falling into a contradiction in terms. Conduct is virtuous only when it implies a love of virtue 'for its own sake'; and this is interpreted to mean that the rule, when apprehended

by the reason, compels our assent by its inherent reasonableness, like the rule that things which are equal to a third are equal to each other. But here we assume that conduct can be determined without reference to feeling, and we explain the uniformity of action by an assumption which makes action unintelligible.

3. How are these various difficulties to be met? The method which resolves morality into reason is, from my point of view, unacceptable upon grounds sufficiently indicated in the whole course of my argument. I have, in fact, assumed all along that conduct is determined by feeling, and this, which appears to me to be true, so far as we can push our analysis, is certainly true, I think, within the sphere of science. It is true, that is, that we are determined to act by our desires, appetites, or emotions, even if the metaphysician and the ontologist can by some means explain a desire as a process of the individual or the universal reason. The statement that I eat because I am hungry expresses a fact with which we are concerned, even if it be not the ultimate form of expression. Any rule, again, which is deduced from the pure reason seems to me to have too wide an application. Formal rationality has no special relation to ethics. No moralist has succeeded in any plausible deduction of the moral code without tacitly introducing an appeal to specific facts properly irrelevant to his doctrine. If general logical rules can be deduced in this way, moral rules can only be deduced by some dexterous sleight of hand. 'Ought' and 'ought not' (as Hume somewhere says) are suddenly inserted in the place of 'is' and 'is not.' Nor, again, can such a method decide between different codes of morality so long as they satisfy the general condition of logical coherence. 'Let every one care for one,' is as good a rule in the sense of formal logic as the rule, 'Let every one love his neighbour as himself.' We can only decide which is the best rule by appealing to facts given by experience, but not deducible from any *a priori* canon of logic. Not only so, but the law, as generally stated, seems to me to give a wrong rule in many cases. In some senses it tends (as I shall have to observe hereafter) to make the external rule unconditional

instead of the internal, and to substitute 'Do this' for 'Be this.' And, finally, I think that it is at bottom an inadequate statement of the undeniable truth that not only is logical consistence implied in the moral law, but that the emotional development implies at every step a corresponding development of the reason. It may be maintained that, as men are, to be perfectly reasonable is also to be perfectly moral. But we cannot omit the condition 'as men are,' or infer morality, without taking into account the specific constitution of men and human society, and we shall have perhaps further to affix a special sense to the words 'perfectly reasonable.'

4. The theory, again, of an autonomous or independent conscience, of a faculty which exists as a primitive and elementary instinct, and which is therefore incapable of further analysis, appears to be equally untenable. I agree, indeed, that here too we have an inaccurate statement of a highly important truth. The theory needs the less discussion because it is part of an obsolete form of speculation. Nothing is easier than to make out a list of separate faculties and to call it a psychology. The plan had its negative advantages so far as it was in useful antithesis to an easy-going analysis, which was too quickly satisfied with explanations of complex mental phenomena. At the present day no one will deny the propriety of rigidly cross-examining the claims of any instinct to be an ultimate factor in the organisation. The difficulties which apply to all such speculations (as, for example, to the phrenological theory of separate organs) are not diminished in the case of conscience. When we take into account any theory of evolution they are greatly increased. The conscience appears historically as a development of simpler instincts. The broad fact must be admitted that 'material morality' makes its appearance long before any conscious recognition of a moral law. We may probably trace the germs of the moral instincts down to the associations of animals; and we may at least assume that men live together and obey certain rules, of which the existing moral law is a continuous development, long before they have any distinct conception of such a law, as distinguished from other rules with which it is originally

identified, and from which it is slowly disengaged as civilisation advances. It would require a very forced interpretation of the process to see in it the introduction of an entirely new factor instead of a gradual development of previously existing sensibilities.

5. Without appealing to the evolutionist, we need not hesitate to say that the theory of conscience as an elementary faculty is untenable or superfluous. Conscience in any case means the pain felt by the wrongdoer, or rather the sensibility implied by that pain. It is exerted when we judge that we have deserved blame, and we deserve blame when we display some moral deficiency. Now a separate instinct—a physical appetite, for example, such as hunger or lust—may give us pain when its dictates are suppressed by some conflicting impulse. It corresponds to a particular function of the organism; it is excited by the appropriate stimulus, and is the sole instinct directly interested in a given class of actions. It is supreme within its own province, but it has to struggle because it is part of a complex whole which can only act in one way at once, though accessible to a variety of stimuli. But it is impossible to conceive of the conscience, in accordance with this analogy, as a particular faculty co-ordinate with others, or as possessing a separate province within which alone it is applicable. We may indeed say, in a sense already explained, that some conduct is morally indifferent, and therefore, if we will, outside the sway of the conscience. That is merely to say that many actions do not justify any inference as to the moral character, and are therefore neither meritorious nor demeritorious in the sense of proving virtue or vice. From the fact that a man is hungry or obeys hunger we can only infer that he has a quality common to the virtuous and the vicious. No moral judgment arises. But this does not mean that the instinct itself has no moral quality; only that the quality cannot be inferred from the particular action. A man's appetite for food has certain determinate relations to his other instincts and affections; and according as it exerts a certain influence, the man is either greedy or temperate, and so far vicious or virtuous.

Hence a man's intrinsic merit or his virtue is always a function of his character considered as a whole, and is affected by every variation of the elementary instincts, though his merit, in the sense of his manifested or proved virtue, is not inferable from the simple fact that he has some instinct which may be exerted either for or against the moral law. Conscience, in short, always implies a judgment of the whole character, although, as a rule, it considers only some special manifestation, and a defect or fitness in some special relation. If it were an instinct co-ordinate with others, we should then require a further judgment to say whether it was in excess or defect relatively to the whole of which it forms a part; and this other faculty would have a better claim to be called conscience.

6. In this sense, it may be remarked, the love of virtue 'for its own sake' is sometimes used so as to convey an absurdity. I may love eating for its own sake, because there is a specific appetite which corresponds to a particular stimulus, and I mean simply to say that the act of eating is pleasant because it gratifies this appetite, whilst no other appetite is directly interested. But it is impossible to conceive of a love of virtue for its own sake as implying a state of mind in which the conscience was gratified whilst no other instinct was interested. If conduct is such as to give no direct stimulus to any of the other instincts, to my love or hate, or hope or fear, or my physical appetites or feelings, then the conscience cannot be stimulated. It is awakened whenever the agent perceives that his appetites are excessive or his emotions distorted; but it has nothing to act upon when none of his appetites or emotions are concerned. By the love of virtue for its own sake, we can only mean that the fact that an action is moral, with all the necessary implications of that statement, whatever they may be, is enough to determine to that action; and not that it has absolutely no other implications, which would, in fact, be to make it inconceivable as conduct at all.

7. If we still speak of the conscience as a separate faculty, but admit that it is stimulated only when other emotions are

stimulated, the proposition seems to evade our grasp. If we consider it as a simple feeling, excited through the perception of other emotions, its law must be dependent upon them. The specific emotion will be produced when certain conditions arise which can be stated independently or in terms of the other instincts. It is a kind of parasitical or dependent sensibility, which gives its responses in obedience to the impinging forces. It varies as they vary; and therefore, whether we admit or reject the hypothesis, it cannot give its own law directly. We must inquire elsewhere what are the conditions under which it produces a painful or a pleasurable emotion. If, on the other hand, we conceive of conscience as a something which judges of an action by some inherent power, we see that we really have to attribute to it reasoning and feeling, a power of estimating an action, comparing it with a rule, of weighing and sympathising with all the various passions concerned; and, in short, we find (as is generally the case with the separate faculties of psychologists) that we are not really speaking of a conscience as one amongst various powers of an individual, but of a conscientious man, who is somehow a spectator of the agent from within.

8. Without further expanding considerations which are sufficiently obvious, and which refer to a rather antiquated form of theory, I must come to the question, What, then, is the conscience? If it be neither a distinct emotion nor a purely intellectual judgment, how are we to account for it? I admit, of course, that there is such a feeling—or rather, my theory rests upon the admission that it exists. Conduct is determined by feeling, and virtuous conduct by the particular kind of feeling which we call the conscience. I consider it, indeed, to be not a primary attribute of the agent (to borrow Spinoza's language), but a mode of the attributes. It is not the less important. Remorse for crime is clearly amongst the most poignant of emotions. It has driven some men mad; it has blighted the whole lives of others; it has in all ages been one great source of the power of the classes who were able to regulate its action and alleviate its pangs. Its

existence is as undeniable as the existence of hunger or cold or heat. Yet I feel bound to add that well-meaning moralists are much given to exaggerate the sorrow which it actually excites. In almost every case the pain which we feel for a bad act is complex, and due only in part to our conviction that we have broken the moral law. The sorrow which I feel for having injured a friend is made up in part, but only in part, of the sorrow which I feel for having injured him wrongfully. We may frequently observe how faint is the purely conscientious emotion. I kill a man, let us suppose, by an accident—by carelessly handling a loaded gun, or when really trying to do him a service, as by mistaking him in the dark for a wild beast, whose attack might be fatal to us both. Or, again, I mean to kill him, and take every step in my power, but he escapes by some entirely unforeseen circumstance. I give him what I believe to be poison, and it turns out to be a wholesome drink; or, *vice versa*, I poison him, meaning to do him good. Now my guilt is obviously proportioned in such cases to my intention: the carelessness is precisely the same whether it produces fatal effects or none; the malice is equal whether the object does or does not happen to escape. But it cannot be doubted, I think, that as a rule the remorse felt by most men depends almost entirely upon the event. Men are made wretched for life when they have killed a friend by pure accident, even where the carelessness has been most trifling; they speedily acquit themselves for the guilt of an action dictated by a malevolent intention, and completed so far as depended upon them, when by some accident the intention has not been realised. These facts may show, as indeed I think they do show, that men reason very loosely in such matters, and often receive pain or pleasure from mere illusions of the imagination. But this comes to the same thing—namely, that, as a matter of fact, the purely conscientious feeling, the pain resulting from the consciousness of my wickedness, is often very feeble, and that much of what we call by that name is the simpler feeling of regret for the mischief caused, irrespectively of the wickedness of causing it. Deduct from repentance all

that is not purely moral, and we must admit that conscience is not so strong *de facto* as perhaps it ought to be *de jure*. Indeed I should say that most men find nothing easier than to suppress its stings, when some immediately bad consequence, or the contempt and abhorrence of their neighbours, does not constantly instil the venom. This is as far as possible from proving that an increased strength of conscience is not highly desirable, and that, even in the existing state of things, its influence is not of the last importance. The force of gravitation, as physicists tell us, is intrinsically very feeble compared with many others, but it keeps the planets in their orbits; and so the sense of duty, faint and flickering as it is in the great mass of men, is sufficient to keep the social order from disruption.

## II. *The Sense of Shame*

9. To explain fully what is meant by conscience, or by any other mode of feeling, would require a complete psychology, such as is not at present in existence. It is enough for my purpose if I can show that it is explicable in conformity with the theory already laid down. We have to ask how the conduct forbidden by the moral law comes to excite a specific sentiment, which we interpret as disapproval when the agent is some one else, as a pang of conscience when he is ourself? The difficulty seems to be, that if we interpret it as a simple emotion, it appears to be more or less arbitrary; if as an intellectual perception, it is difficult to see how it can affect conduct; whilst the theory which makes conscience an independent faculty, invested both with intellectual and emotional attributes, seems only to evade the difficulty by help of an unjustifiable assumption. In any case, it seems clear, however, that there must be both an intellectual and an emotional side to the process. The old moralists distinguished between the conscience which declared the law and that which punished a breach of the law. Each process, in fact, seems to imply the other. If I perceive that conduct is wrong because forbidden by law, the sense that I am breaking the law must

be painful, in order that the law may have any binding force. If, again, we suppose that every wrong act is attended by a specific feeling, I could construct the law by generalising from my experience of the feeling. This or that act causes the specific pain called remorse ; these actions, therefore, are forbidden by the moral law : or the moral law is a statement of the actions which cause remorse. A wrong action would be definable as a remorse-causing action. The function of conscience would be similar to that of hearing in regard to music. The ear decides authoritatively that certain sounds are discordant and others harmonious. The scientific observer notes these cases, and proceeds to determine, with the help of his reason and his other senses, what are the conditions which produce disagreeable sounds. If the conscience were in fact as distinct and separable a faculty as the hearing, we should be able to decide by a similar process what were the conditions which caused painful and pleasurable emotions of this particular class. It might, of course, turn out that the conscience varied indefinitely from one man to another, or that it gave uniform decisions in all men. In the former case, we should again have to inquire what were the laws of its variation, and then to inquire whether, and if so, in what sense, one conscience could be regarded as better than another. We have, however, the preliminary difficulty already stated, that the conscience is not in this way marked off from all other modes of feeling or reasoning, and that the law is given much more distinctly than the feeling by which it is enforced.

10. There is, indeed, a sensibility which seems to have as good a claim as any other to be regarded as elementary, and which is clearly concerned in most of our moral judgments. The sense of shame appears to me, so far as one can judge by the direct introspective method, to be one of the most distinctive of our feelings, and the presumption seems to be confirmed by its having a distinct physical manifestation of blushing. If we assume that this emotion is really something distinct in itself we may ask, as we ask in the case of music, what are the conditions under which it arises ? It is clearly excited by breaches of the moral law, and especially by

detected breaches. A man is ashamed of himself for conduct which is actually condemned by the moral judgment of his neighbours, so far at least as he sympathises with the general morality, and he is ashamed of conduct which would be condemned if known. In most men, however, and indeed in all but exceptionally sensitive men, the shame is enormously increased by the actual condemnation, and, in many cases, seems to be exclusively due to the consciousness of this condemnation. Again, so far as I can guess, it does not appear to me that the sense of shame is proportioned to the moral gravity of the offence. There is a difficulty in speaking positively upon such a matter, because the relative importance of different kinds of offences is very differently estimated by different moralists, and it is hard to suggest any assignable measure of the gravity. Some moralists, for example, attach a preponderating importance to veracity and others to chastity; some think more of the virtue of justice, and others of the virtue of benevolence; but it is not possible to define in any way the weight assigned to different considerations, especially as there is no agreement as to the irrelevancy of particular considerations. Speaking roughly, however, one would say that a sense of shame is more excited by offences of sensuality than by offences of cruelty. We say, indeed, 'What a shame!' when we hear of a gross act of oppression; but a man convicted of tyranny seems hardly to be liable to shame in the same way as a man convicted of some offence against purity. This tyrant may excite more abhorrence but less disgust; he is not regarded with contempt, and the sense of being contemptible is peculiarly connected with shame.

11. Thus, again, we find that the conduct enforced by the sense of shame seems to extend beyond the sphere of morality proper. We may perhaps say, in a general way, that indecency is wrong; but there are a great many acts which we call indecorous, if not actually indecent, to which we should scruple to give so grave a name. A want of compliance with the regulations of the society in which we live excites shame, often very acutely and painfully, and yet we should hesitate to describe it as immoral. This, of course, comes in partly

under a familiar principle. If it is right to obey a ruler, it is right to obey his particular commands in cases where the conduct would otherwise be indifferent; and so, in many cases, it is right to do at Rome as Rome does; it is right to cover parts of the body in England which it may be right to leave bare in Abyssinia. But it seems also to be true that the emotion of shame extends beyond the actions which would be regarded as in any sense wicked. Nobody would call a man immoral for appearing at a dinner-party in a shooting-coat, but a young man would probably feel more ashamed of himself for such an action than for many offences which he would admit to be far graver. Many sensitive people would feel far less shame if detected in a crime than in committing an indecent action, even though the breach of decency were involuntary, and therefore not in any sense immoral. So women may cease to be virtuous without ceasing to be modest, and some might possibly prefer a loss of virtue to a loss of modesty.

12. The same may be said in cases which are less ambiguous. Decency may always be regarded as a kind of minor morality; but the sense of shame is often most powerfully excited in cases where there is no question of morality at all. There are few things which a man remembers with a more hearty and ineffaceable sense of shame than his having—in the vulgar phrase—made a fool of himself. A youth who has tried to say something witty, and whose luckless joke has fallen flat or provoked ridicule, has a memory which will revisit him in dreams and make him blush in private whenever it recurs to him. Even a grave moralist may often, I suspect, suffer more pain for such slips than is visited upon him for indisputable moral offences. And not only thus, but in many cases the sense of shame operates against the moral code. The boy who thinks it right to say his prayers is ashamed when his practice is detected by unsympathetic observers. In some cases a young man is ashamed of chastity and sobriety when his companions act upon different principles, even though they do not explicitly deny the validity of the moral code. We call this, of course, a false shame, and doubtless it is 'false' in the sense that it can only

be justified by false reasoning; but it is, whilst it lasts, as real as any other feeling, and therefore, whatever the cause of its being enlisted in the service of the enemy, it is clear that it is not invariably to be found as an ally of conscience.

13. Now the general principle which appears to be involved in this case is simply that a sense of shame is somehow involved in a state of heightened self-consciousness. The bare fact that we are the objects of attention is sufficient to produce the painful sensation of shyness, and that even when we are the objects of admiring attention. We see ourselves through the eyes of others; we attend to ourselves out of sympathy with their attention to us, and are at once object and subject of our own feelings. When, in addition to this, the attention is of a hostile kind, or the self-consciousness a consciousness of defects; when we are the objects of our own hatred, contempt, disgust, or ridicule, we have some of the most disagreeable emotions of which our nature is capable. If this be the general law of the feeling, it is intelligible that it should be closely connected with, and yet in many respects diverge from, the conscientious feeling. So far as we break the moral law we are acting in opposition to the general sentiment, and therefore incurring disapproval. But the law of shame does not coincide precisely with the moral code; for, in the first place, our feeling in regard to different moral offences seems to differ in quality, and our abhorrence of cruelty, though it may be in some senses stronger, is less keen, and therefore less provocative of the sense of shame, than the spasm of physical disgust which we feel for some kinds of sensuality; and, in the next place, the code extends beyond the moral code, inasmuch as many things are exquisitely ridiculous which are not immoral; and, finally, it may even conflict with morality, in that case, at least, in which a kind of spurious moral code is formed by a special section of society, or in cases where the conduct deflects from the average standard, not by falling short, but by exceeding it in a way which seems to imply a tacit reproach to others.

14. The sense of shame, then, is in some sense implicated in conscientious feeling. It is clearly a part of the emotion

which restrains me from wrongdoing. I shrink from detection in shameful conduct, and from conduct which would be shameful if detected. The motive, whether I call it conscientiousness or not, acts on behalf of any accepted moral code; but we cannot identify it with the conscience, because it operates fitfully, affects conduct which is not moral, and is sometimes even opposed to morality; as also because it condemns crimes which are found out much more emphatically than the same crimes when they are not found out. The question therefore arises how such an emotion can supply an intrinsic motive to virtue. Has it not rather a dangerous and disturbing influence? So far as I am accessible to shame, shall I not be inclined to over-estimate the judgment of the special class in which I live, to regard decorum as of more importance than real virtue, to make respectability the measure of my conduct, to prefer the infliction of a real injury upon one who cannot complain to showing the least disregard in public to the slightest fancies of a conspicuous ruler, to obey codes which I disapprove in my heart, such as that which enforces duelling, and to break through moral laws which are generally neglected, such as that which condemns bribery; and, above all, shall I not feel a much greater fear of being found out than of being guilty? To this I should reply: Undoubtedly shame often acts in this undesirable way. It is not identical with conscience, and when badly informed or regulated it may even put obstacles in the way of moral progress, and account for the fitful and apparently arbitrary fluctuations in the moral standard. But I should also find it impossible to say that the shame felt by a sinner is not part of the conscientious feeling or of the intrinsic sanction of morality. The difficulty is, that if we admit it as part of the conscientious feeling, we admit an element of feeling which may vary from one man to another, and which does not account for the specific character of conscience. This requires a little further consideration.

15. Shame, in the first place, is the name of a certain state of consciousness. I know that I am ashamed as I know that I have the toothache, or as I know that I am amused—

by direct feeling. It is so far an ultimate fact, which cannot be explained any more than any other immediate feeling or emotion; we feel, and therefore we know that we feel, and no more can be said. But we may, of course, proceed to ask, What are the conditions under which this feeling is generated? It involves, we say, a certain intellectual perception; we have only, then, to say what is this perception in order to assign the law of the feeling. So, for example, it would be easy to suggest that shame arises when we perceive our inferiority to others, and then to infer that shame is the perception of inferiority. This method, however tempting it may be, leads in fact to endless confusion. Nothing is really more difficult than to discover the law of a feeling. Philosophers dispute endlessly as to the definitions of such words as 'beautiful,' 'ludicrous,' or 'shameful.' Although every one may understand what is the emotion which arises when we see a beautiful object, or are moved to laughter by the ludicrous, or to blushing by the shameful, it is at least as difficult to discover the law of these emotions as to discover the law of any physical phenomena, and the only satisfactory method is in either case by a systematic interrogation of experience; we should, in fact, have to discover all the cases in which we do, in fact, feel the emotion in question. When we are ashamed we are ashamed, and we are often ashamed when our preconceived formula seems to be inapplicable. We feel, and in each particular case we know our feeling, or in other words we are conscious; but we are not by any means directly conscious of the law of the feeling, or able to say in what other cases it will arise. So soon as we begin to generalise we are liable to indefinite error, and we are just as apt to go wrong about the phenomena of our own consciousness as about any other phenomena. The reason is, as I should say, that the perception, for example, of our inferiority is not a bare logical process, but is also a mode of feeling: it involves a comparison of immediate and represented states of feeling; and the compound emotion which arises will vary as they vary, and cannot be deduced from the simple statement of the identity or diversity of two conceptions. In fact, nothing is more common

than to find that the philosophical definition hopelessly breaks down, and that we do not feel what our theorists tell us that we shall feel when the case actually occurs. In short, to find the law of any of these modes of feeling requires, not a simple generalisation of a formal logical statement, but a verifiable and scientific psychology.

16. The feeling of shame, then, appears as a positive datum in our theories. It represents a matter of fact which can only be explained and its laws determined through careful observation. In this sense it seems to give rise to direct and unassailable intuitions. In any given case, at least, I am conscious of feeling or of not feeling shame, and I may, if I please, state this as an intuitive perception, that the condition in which I am placed is shameful. Nor, again, am I much further advanced if I admit that shame arises whenever I am conscious of doing something disgusting, ridiculous, or even strongly provocative of the attention of others; for I must ask what are the conditions which make conduct ridiculous, disgusting, and so forth. This is no easier than to say what makes it shameful. And not only so, but it would seem that the relation is reciprocal; that is to say, that a man in whom a sensibility to shame is keen will find things ludicrous or disgusting which are not so to his less sensitive neighbour; and thus, again, we seem to be falling into a vicious circle, or to have an insoluble problem.

17. The case, however, so far as we are concerned, may be sufficiently solved. In the first, shame, considered as a mode of feeling, has a certain and conceivably determinable function in the moral constitution. It is not arbitrary except in the sense that it is a datum which is given by experience, but cannot be deduced by any *a priori* process. It is not arbitrary in the sense of being susceptible of indefinite variation, which seems to be the impression of those who would say that to admit such a feeling as determining the conscience is to make morality a mere 'matter of taste.' Even taste or fashion is not 'arbitrary' in the full sense of the word, for in that sense nothing is arbitrary; it has its laws, though they are laws consistent with a very wide variation from one individual to

another. The emotion is of course limited by the physiological and psychological laws of the individual structure. It may, as I have said, vary very widely in some respects. A degree of nudity which is excusable in one region is disgusting in another: and, generally speaking, the emotion—as follows from its general nature—is of course very amenable to custom. As a medical student soon loses the sense of horror at surgical operations, a child brought up in a degraded social state feels no instinctive revolt against impurity, dishonesty, falsehood, or cruelty. But the variation, though it is impossible to assign its limits, because we have not the necessary experience for deciding such a problem, is clearly not indefinite. The instinctive repugnance to sights of blood and mangled flesh may be suppressed, but it could not be generated at pleasure in regard to any other objects. So, as I have suggested, the feeling of shame is specially stimulated where certain passions are concerned, and this implies the existence of physiological laws which cannot be altered so long as the most fundamental properties of human nature remain. We may doubt how far it would be possible, by any course of training, to invert the sense of shame in particular cases, and to make those actions disgraceful which are now honourable or *vice versa*. But in any case, it is clear that the variation is limited and forced to take place along certain lines, if we may so speak, by the constitution of our nature. It can no more be arbitrarily changed at the will of some other person than a legislator could order men to be seasick on land and comfortable at sea, or force our gorge to rise at wholesome food and make carrion appetising. The organism is not the less subject to precise laws because it is capable of responding in a vast variety of ways to different stimuli.

18. Undoubtedly, however, the possible variation is great enough to conform to the observed variability of moral codes. If men are, in fact, shameless in certain respects in one country and ashamed in another; if the standards of courage, purity, truthfulness, and benevolence vary widely, and without any corresponding variation in the innate powers of the individual, it follows of course that the determining condition

must be the social medium. What is not explained by the individual organism must be explained by the social organism. If modern Englishmen are disgusted by conduct which did not disgust Socrates, we must explain the difference by the whole social development which has taken place in the interval; and, if my theory of morality be correct, this shows in what sense variation is possible. The existence of a social order or a certain stage of development implies a corresponding development in the individual, considered as a constituent part of the society. This development implies on the one hand the attainment of a certain moral standard, which, again, implies obedience to and respect for the primary moral laws; and, on the other, it implies that the whole character of the individual, including the sense of shame, which is one of the most powerful factors in determining his conduct, must be so modified as to imply an acceptance of the standard. The fixed element which causes the sense of shame to develop, so to speak, along certain lines, is simply the social necessity. I have tried to show in what sense morality is essential to social vitality, and in that sense and within these limits the sense of shame must be so moulded as to maintain the moral standard, unless the society is not to deteriorate, and to raise it if the society is to make progress.

19. This is enough to show that there are narrow though not easily assignable limits to a possible variation of the instinctive feeling. Social development implies moral development, but it of course implies much more. It implies the development of a certain type of character, which includes as essential certain moral qualities. It implies, that is, the growth of mutual confidence, peacefulness, the restraint of antisocial passions, and so forth. But though a certain moral conformation is implied, and is essential to the social efficiency of the agent, his possession of these qualities does not define his character. We may have an indefinite variety of talents and sensibilities not directly concerned in this morality. Consistently with moral excellence, he may be an artist, a philosopher or a poet, a statesman or an artisan, a priest or a lawyer, and in each case his character and his

intellect will be stimulated in different ways and have different excellences. The morality is an attribute of the core or nucleus of character, separable only by an abstraction, not as a concrete entity: it defines the qualities necessary in every relation; it imposes certain limits upon every instinct, and is itself strengthened or weakened by the reaction of every part of our natures. There is no reason therefore to suppose that it has any faculty peculiar to itself. A given instinct, such as the sense of shame, may be so developed that the whole character conforms to the moral type; but it may be called into play in many cases where morality is not immediately concerned, and every other instinct must also have a part along with it in enforcing the moral law. The qualities implied by morality do not correspond to any separate instinct any more than moral actions constitute a separate class amongst other qualities. They only define certain modes of reaction of the whole organism in particular relations.

20. It follows that the dictates of an instinct such as shame are not arbitrary in the sense sometimes assumed. If, in fact, some conduct were condemned simply as offensive to a separate instinct which might or might not be present, there would be a difficulty in obtaining a fixed rule. This disgusts me and that disgusts you; who is to say which is in the right? To this it may be answered that he is right who is disgusted by really mischievous things. The answer is satisfactory as far as it goes, but it leaves a difficulty unsolved. If the instinct which forbids certain conduct, say a sense of decency, were something separate and unsociable, we must ask whether it has a right to be considered in the matter. Indecent conduct is no doubt mischievous so far as it gives pain, but we can get rid of the sense of decency, and then the conduct will not give that kind of pain. The objection, then, to the indecent action is extrinsic; it is not bad simply because indecent, but because it has some other ill effect; and if the sense of decency could be abolished without any other alteration in character, we might propose to get rid of it as, on the whole, a troublesome and illusory

quality. We should then object only to those indecent actions which appeared to be mischievous upon other grounds, and judge directly by their utility as so measured, without considering their superfluous or supplementary inconvenience. When, however, we consider the whole problem, this is obviously inadequate. Undoubtedly the evil of indecent actions is not confined to the simple pain inflicted upon that particular sensibility. The sense of decency is closely connected with the virtue of purity, and it is desirable to maintain it as a kind of outpost which defends a virtue most essential to society. But this, as we have seen, does not exhaust the utility of the instinct, when we consider it not as a separate mode of feeling, but as a sensibility implied in the whole development of character. A man, that is, who is not endowed with a capacity for such feeling, must be made throughout of coarser fibre. A society in which some code of decency is not developed must be entirely wanting in a refinement and delicacy which is an essential symptom, and reciprocally an essential condition, of any but the lowest stages of barbarism. The penal code may vary widely; some code is necessary if men are to be more than a herd of brutes. We must, in short, as I have previously said, consider the whole organisation of man in society. We cannot measure the value of a sense of decency by simply considering a particular set of bad consequences resulting from indecent actions other than the shock to decency, but the whole difference between a state of society which possesses and one which does not possess such a code. That difference would probably turn out to be the difference between a thoroughly brutalised and a really refined and intelligent social state, in which the moral qualities were in harmony with the general advance in the scale of civilisation. To ask what is the use of a sense of decency is to ask how far any tolerable social order could be constructed without stimulating the various emotive sensibilities which are concerned in generating that sense and forming a corresponding code, and no mode of inquiry can be satisfactory which omits a full consideration of all the implied conditions.

### III. *Æsthetic Judgments*

21. The value, therefore, of any particular instinct depends upon its place in the whole character, and is thus not arbitrary in the sense in which it would be arbitrary if we could speak intelligibly of men as made up of different faculties, any one of which could be removed without implying a change of the whole organisation. The question remains how it comes to pass that the conscientious feeling, which is thus a function of the whole character and not a specific faculty, comes to have so distinctive a quality as is at least frequently attributed to it? This difficulty, as I may observe in the first place, is not peculiar to ethical judgments. When we say, 'This is beautiful or ugly,' we refer to a set of feelings which, in the judgment of common sense, are quite as distinctive in respect of quality as those to which we refer when we say, 'This is right or wrong,' if by those words we mean agreeable or offensive to the moral feeling. In the latter case, it is true, there is also a reference to a fixed rule, which is supposed to be the same for every one, whilst the æsthetic judgment has little or no reference to any such rule, This, however, only means that the laws of the æsthetic feelings are much more dependent upon the idiosyncrasies of the individual than the laws of the ethical feelings. I will consider directly what is implied in this. It is not inconsistent with the statement, which seems in any case to be true, that we know as well what is meant by the sense of the beautiful as by the sense of the morally right, just as we know what is meant by the sensual appetite for food, although one man likes one food and one another. The class to which the feelings belong is as distinctly marked off from other classes, though it is more variable in its dictates.

22. Now the æsthetic feelings, whatever else they may be, are not a set of separate emotions, distinct from others as one physical appetite is distinct from another. On the contrary, it is the prerogative of art to call into play every possible variety of emotion. We say that a woman, a sunset, a picture, a tune, or a simple colour or form, is beautiful. We

mean that some of our passions are agreeably stimulated, not that a set of passions distinct from those which affect us in other relations is stimulated. In one case, it is the direct pleasure of the senses; in others, moods which call into play an indefinite variety of intellectual processes; as in reading a fine poem, our pleasure may be derived from the tender melancholy of old associations or from thoughts of the sorrows and joys of the whole human race. To decide what constitutes the æsthetic mood would be to enter upon a very thorny problem, for which I am not competent, and which does not appear to be relevant to the present question. One point, however, is sufficient for my purpose. We may assume, that is, the truth of the general statement that the end of all truly æsthetic indulgence is the immediate pleasure; and this statement would be sufficient if it could be made quite accurate for my present purpose.

23. I find, indeed, a certain difficulty in stating this criterion to my satisfaction, and the difficulty arises, I think, from the fact that the distinction is not so absolute as is frequently assumed. All conduct whatever is determined in the sense already explained by the pleasantness or painfulness of the corresponding feeling; and conduct in this sense must include both æsthetic and other modes of activity. The proposition, for example, must be equally true whether I am composing or listening to music, or painting pictures, or fighting, or labouring in the fields. It must be equally true, again, that the immediate pleasure is the sole determining condition, whether I am drinking a glass of wine or listening to a song; and we should be stretching the definition of æsthetic enjoyment too widely if we used it to include the former kind of pleasure. The distinction seems to correspond to the distinction between play and work. Certain activities are consciously intended to procure some future pleasure and to modify the conditions of my existence; in others, I have no thoughts of anything beyond the present, and I find pleasure in the simple utterance of my emotions and their direct stimulation without reference to future consequences. If I hunt to get food, I am at work; if I hunt without caring for

any ulterior results, I am at play. When I read a story or see a play, the same emotions are stimulated which would be affected if I were reading history or witnessing a scene in real life: the sense of the unreality of the objects presented to my eyes or my imagination converts my feelings into the æsthetic state as it deprives them of the normal influence upon conduct. In Dryden's Ode, Alexander passes through all the emotions in turn of pride, ambition, love, pity, and anger, till one happens to coincide with an opportunity for action, and the emotional force which had previously expended itself in vague excitement suddenly discharges along a fixed channel and propels him to energetic action. In one case, it seems, we are, so to speak, merely discharging feeling or blowing off steam; in the other, applying it to the purpose of doing mechanical work.

24. The difference, then, between æsthetic and other pleasures depends upon the form of the gratification, not upon the instincts gratified. The poet or the artist appeals to my love, hate, or sympathy as much as the preacher or the philosopher, though he does not direct them to any specific practical end; and hence we have the variability of the æsthetic canons of taste which seems to distinguish them from the rule of conscience. Whatever gives pleasure may give æsthetic pleasure, and there seems to be in some directions hardly any limits to the divergence of individual tastes. If I like this colour or taste and you like that, we are equally pleased, and there is no criterion for deciding our difference, So treacherous and fluctuating a mode of feeling should therefore, it is said, be excluded from moral judgments if morality is not to be regarded as a mere fashion. The answer, so far as the moralist is concerned, is not difficult. However variable the taste may be, it is not—for nothing is—absolutely variable. Even in the simple case of a direct pleasure of the senses—a love of bright colours, for example—the scientific observer may show that certain sensibilities are essentially connected with certain organic conditions, and thus that some imply healthy and others morbid conditions. The sense of the beautiful, again, implies the presence of an

intellectual element, and the development of the intellect thus imposes certain conditions on the development of the taste. So, for example, the pleasure which we derive from the sight of a fine figure or a perfect statue implies a power of judging of certain relations of form, a capacity for recognising that a given conformation corresponds to the best possible combination of strength and activity. It is, indeed, another question to ask why such a combination should give us pleasure; and we need not attempt to decide whether the recognition is explicit or implicit, whether we feel or reason, or judge by an instinct, or in any degree by a recognised formula. In any case the taste must conform to the facts, and will be more or less the same whenever the conditions of strength and activity are the same, and a perception that they are fulfilled gives pleasure: and this is equally true where the perception which gives pleasure involves some condition of the intellectual emotions.

25. This, I think, explains the sense in which we must admit that the conscience includes an æsthetic element, and in which we may properly speak of a moral sense. Any pleasurable emotion whatever may be involved in what is called æsthetic pleasure. We derive pleasure, therefore, from a vast variety of perceptions which have no assignable relation to moral feeling. Anything which stimulates the emotions agreeably may give rise to an æsthetic pleasure, the only conditions being that the mode of feeling must be agreeable, and must not be expended on what we call practical effort. One kind of æsthetic pleasure, therefore, is that which we derive from the contemplation of certain characters or the play of certain emotions in our fellows. Moral approval includes the pleasure derived from the contemplation of virtuous character, and may therefore give rise to an æsthetic pleasure. If we admire heroism, unselfishness, simplicity, and other moral qualities in real life, the artist may appeal to that emotion as well as to any other: he may set before us imaginary ideals, from the contemplation of which we may derive a very keen as well as very elevating pleasure, or he may provide us with a means of uttering the emotions which are

habitually stimulated by such contemplation, or by the directly moral emotions themselves. So far as there is any emotional element in our approval of moral conduct, it may take the æsthetic form. According to me, it would be impossible that morality itself should be maintained if it did not excite these pleasurable emotions. The conception of merit implies, as I have argued, the social pressure which consists in a general approval and admiration of certain qualities and a disapproval and contempt of their opposites. The emotion may pass from one phase to the other according to circumstances. It is in the æsthetic phase when we simply enjoy the contemplation of some beautiful moral type set before us in history or fiction, and passes into the practical phase as soon as it begins to have a definite relation to the conduct of our lives. If, for example, I admire the simplicity and tenderness of the 'Vicar of Wakefield' whilst I am reading Goldsmith's masterpiece, I am simply in the æsthetic frame of mind. If an analogous case presents itself at the moment, the emotion kindled by the artist may prompt me to charitable and so far moral action. The strains of military music may produce an ardent excitement which expends itself in mere feeling, or may stimulate a regiment to mount a dangerous breach.

26. But admitting the existence of the feeling, how far does it bring any guarantee of conformity to the moral law? How far are the dictates of the moral sense infallible or authoritative? The bare fact that the contemplation of certain emotions or types of character is pleasurable does not prove that they are morally good or bad, for, in the first place, no moral question may be raised. I may simply be sympathising with emotions common to the good and the bad; but if a moral sentiment be involved, the bare fact that you and I approve is clearly not conclusive as to its rightness. Nor does it always follow that a conviction of the moral excellence of certain character or conduct will suffice to make the contemplation agreeable. This, indeed, is obvious from a consideration of the way in which we suppose the moral law to arise. When I say that I know an action to be right, I may mean simply that it is in conformity with a law which, for

whatever reason, I respect. So long as the moral law is stated in the external form, and is obeyed from some extrinsic motive, such as respect for the authority of the supposed legislator, I may approve obedience without feeling any vivid and spontaneous pleasure. I admit this or that to be right —that is, commanded—and on the whole, therefore, I wish to see it done; but I do not feel that spontaneous and instinctive sympathy which is necessary to generate æsthetic pleasure. It is only in so far as the moral law has become the law of my character, and expresses the way in which my emotions act previously to reflection upon any abstract principle, that I can be said to have a moral sense. Undoubtedly this moral instinct may be exceedingly powerful and sensitive in some characters, and give indications more delicate than any process of deliberate calculation. A man of fine moral sensibility may perceive emotional discords as a man of fine musical ear may be sensitive to differences of sound too slight to be measured by scientific observers. So we may in certain cases accept the judgment of a man who is remarkable for a keen sense of honour. The fact that certain conduct does not shock him is evidence that it cannot be dishonourable: we hold that his instinctive perceptions supply a more delicate test than can be embodied in any cut-and-dried formula.

27. We may admit, then, that the thorough assimilation of the moral law implies the growth of a sensibility which may be called æsthetic—a capacity for receiving delight from the bare contemplation of high moral qualities, abstractedly from any special advantages expected from them, or from any extrinsic consequences. We may agree that to some extent this sensibility must be developed in every truly virtuous person, that is, in any person in whom the instincts which dictate obedience to the moral law have become definitely organised; and, further, that this æsthetic pleasure implies a corresponding sentiment as governing practice, and that in the more finely constituted natures it implies a delicacy of discrimination beyond that which can be formulated in any of the accepted moral commonplaces. Unless, indeed, the moral sense is cultivated up to this pitch, so that we take a spon-

taneous delight in the spectacle of heroic or philanthropic energy, we can hardly say that a society has become tolerably moralised. But we still have to admit that there is an apparently arbitrary or indeterminate element in such feeling. It varies from one man to another, and it is difficult to suggest any test for distinguishing between the healthy and the morbid sensibility; between that exquisite perception which outruns the more tangible tests and the perverted perception which is biassed by some individual peculiarity. A man of a high sense of honour, for example, may be Quixotic; he may attach undue value to certain considerations, and sanction a retrograde instead of an advanced moral code.

28. What, then, is the fixed element? The instinctive feeling always includes, we may say, an intellectual judgment. But what is this implicit judgment? It is *prima facie* a judgment that this or that conduct gives pleasure. But as different things may please different people, two divergent judgments may be equally right. It is still, after all, a question of taste, and therefore comes within the proverbial exclusion from a possibility of logical decision. It is clear, however, that even a question of taste may often admit of being brought to an issue of facts. So, in the analogy already suggested, two sculptors may prefer two different ideals, yet both of them may agree in preferring that form which represents, say, the most perfect combination of strength and agility. There is therefore a clear objective test. One of the two forms represented will in fact perform a given feat with the least effort, or with a given effort produce the greatest results. The process of educating the taste is virtually a process of learning to solve such problems instinctively, and we may say that the taste is best which solves them most accurately. The question is therefore a question of fact, though it may be one of such complexity that it is impossible to obtain more than an approximate solution.

29. Now, if we apply this analogy, we have to say what is the problem presented to the moralist. Every moral judgment, as I have argued, is an implicit (if not an explicit) approval of a certain type of character. It includes there-

fore an assertion that the highest type includes certain qualities of character, which, of course, imply corresponding modes of conduct. The highest type, again, must according to our theory be that which is on the whole best fitted for the conditions of social welfare. The problem is just as precise as the problem which physical conformation is best adapted to satisfy the conditions of health, strength, and activity. The fact, so far as it is a fact, that we cannot obtain an accurate solution does not prove that there is no such solution to be found, but only that the solution requires longer observation and a more elaborate set of experiments before we can hit upon it. The experiment, in fact, is that which is being always carried on by the collective experience of the race; and though we have established beyond a possibility of doubt certain general principles which are the basis of the accepted moral code, there is still a considerable margin of uncertainty in details. Upon this assumption, the problem for the moralist is analogous to the problem for the artist; each is virtually trying to discover a certain type which has definite conditions to satisfy—briefly speaking, that of bodily vigour in one case and of social vitality in the other.

## IV. *The Conscience*

30. But it must also be admitted that, although I have argued that this gives a correct definition of morality, or a description of the function actually discharged by the moral sentiments, I have not maintained, nor does it seem to be in fact maintainable, that it is a description of the explicit aim of moral conduct. I have considered what is the ground or cause of morality, what is the explanation of its existence to an independent observer; but I have not considered what is the reason which is consciously admitted by moral agents. The society is moral up to a certain standard 'because' the society could not reach a certain stage of development without being so far moral. But this does not imply that the end of every man, so far as moral, is the elevation of society or the preservation of its vigour. On the contrary, it may be true that though the moral man contributes to that end, he

may never think about it. So far as the units are moral, the social organism which they constitute is healthy; but a man's reason for being moral need not include any reference to that fact nor need the reasons always be identical. A man may act from a given instinct without asking how he comes to have that instinct, nor whether it is original or derivative, permanent or destructible, useful in any sense to himself or to others. Indeed, the plausibility of rival systems of ethics is partly due to the fact that men may be moral—that is, may obey certain external rules of conduct—from different motives; with some the motive may be fear of hell, an association with certain accidental circumstances, or some instinct which has been generated they know not how; or, again, the immediate motive may be a desire of consistency, or direct sympathy with their surrounding neighbours; and although it is true that, in each of these cases, there corresponds a certain type of character, and the difference might be revealed by the occurrence of special conditions, still, under the average circumstances of life, the resulting rule of conduct may be approximately the same. How far one motive or system of motives is more strictly entitled to be called conscientious than another is a question to be considered directly; and thus we have to ask how the different modes of regarding morality can all lead to the same result, or how men should obtain the answer to one problem when they are apparently aiming at another.

31. The answer, as I take it, follows from the facts already stated. To any particular association of human beings there must correspond a certain corporate sentiment. A state implies the existence of feelings of loyalty or patriotism; a church, a certain religious sentiment which carries with it attachment to the ecclesiastical order; an army implies discipline; a college, a school, and a club imply certain sentiments of mutual good will and readiness to accept the condition of common action for the purposes of the particular association. Whatever may be the cause of the existing sentiments, whatever may be the end of the association or the function of the social organ, the corporate sentiment which holds it together must always imply conformity to certain rules necessary to

the welfare of the body; and as the sentiment is vigorous or feeble, the body will so far tend to flourish or decay. Moreover the sentiment which springs up and binds men together implies something which it is often very hard to distinguish from a moral sentiment. The spirit of loyalty to some special association sometimes conflicts with the ordinary moral law, and is often strong enough to overcome it. A thief is bound to his gang by a sentiment which we call immoral, because it implies conduct condemned by the prevailing moral code; but so far as it implies a genuine identification of himself with the gang, and a sacrifice of his private interests to those of the community, it is rather a kind of spurious or class morality, implying obedience to a rival moral code. So the member of a particular class acquires a sense of obligation to the class even where its interests conflict with those of the organism at large. The proverbial *noblesse oblige* may imply a more refined sense of honour, but it also frequently implies a regard for the privileges of the class abstractedly from the question of their utility to the whole community. When we take the wider associations, the state, for example, it becomes difficult to distinguish between the sphere of conscience and that of the more specific sentiment. Patriotism, we say, is a duty; and of course it is a duty in every man to promote the welfare of the nation to which he belongs. But there are cases—unfortunately of not infrequent occurrence—in which the duty of patriotism seems to diverge from the duty in a wider sense. Even intelligent people are not ashamed to limit their obligations by the supposed interests of their country—to declare that it is a man's 'duty' to be for his country 'right or wrong'—to promote the happiness of Englishmen even at the expense of the general welfare of the world, or even to extend the British Empire at the expense of the happiness of all its constituent members. The sense of duty or obligation to any class to which we may happen to belong seems to have very much the same quality, so to speak, as the moral sense, though we only use the word 'duty' when we are not considering the class, or when it is so large that our intellectual horizon does not practically extend beyond it.

32. Now, upon my showing, the sense of duty or the purely moral obligation has the same relation to the 'social tissue' as the various special sentiments corresponding to each organ or association have to the body to which they correspond. I am patriotic so far as Englishman, and moral so far as human being, or rather as a constituent member of a certain social order. The difficulty, then, with which we are now concerned is simply that in the one case there is, and in the other there is not, a certain definite and rounded body which may serve as the concrete object of my devotion. It would be hopeless to attempt an analysis of all the sentiments which go to form patriotism, and it is enough to say that at times they include the most unselfish emotions and the widest intellectual culture, as in the case of our best statesmen. whilst sometimes the sentiment may exhibit itself in the grotesque form of the aversion of a clown for a race of which he only knows that it uses strange words, and such a sentiment includes in its composition many unamiable and selfish feelings. And yet there is so much similarity that the clown and the statesman may be equally ready to die for the flag, or uphold what is generally supposed to be the honour of their nation. Now if the nation were something formless and indefinite, something which had no definite external symbols and could issue no definite orders, how could any devotion be either generated or displayed? And this seems to be the case with that extremely indefinite entity the 'social tissue,' which can neither give rules nor be regarded as an object of devotion.

33. The answer seems to be twofold. In the first place, every possible form of association implies some moral training. So far as a man is a member of any larger organisation, the qualities which fit him for social action are stimulated and disciplined. As a citizen, as a member of a church, and in every other capacity in life, he learns subordination, self-restraint, consideration for others, and so forth. The quality of every particular organ depends upon the qualities of the tissue from which it is constituted, and have invariably an influence upon it. The character of each unit is affected in

some degree by his position as a member of the larger body, and the modification thus impressed affects him in all other capacities. If I learn obedience as a soldier or self-restraint as a member of a club, I shall be so far adapted to display the same characteristics in any other relation in which I may be placed. And further, as a general rule, the conditions of vitality of the society at large must be also conditions for the vigour of any particular association formed from it. Anything which contributes to a man's health in general is also useful in any particular employment. There is not one set of sanitary rules for a peasant and another for an artisan, though each occupation has its special conditions, which may be regarded as modifications of the more general. This is equally true of the conditions of social health. So far as a man is morally better, he is better fitted for the particular duties imposed upon him by his special position in the general organisation. In fact, if an association were so constituted as to require a set of rules different from the general rules, or, in other words, if immorality were a condition of membership, it would correspond to a morbid growth instead of a normal organ. The society would so far be in a condition of decay, and the elimination of the association in question would be necessary for its vitality. The general condition, in short, of social vigour implies an approximate identity of interests between the whole and every constituent part. It is, of course, true indeed that the special interests of a particular part of the community may conflict with those of the whole, and it is the chief duty of a statesman to guard against such deviations on pain of revolution or social decay. The devotion of the soldier may tell in favour of despotism, and patriotic spirit may lead to the most atrocious conduct towards outsiders. In such cases, of course, we have imperfect or one-sided moral systems, but they are still moral. That is to say, qualities are stimulated which are so far moral as they imply an identity between the individual and some larger organism, although the interests of that organism diverge from those of society at large. In order that a man may be an effective member of

any society, he must have certain moral qualifications, and what is required is an enlargement of his perceptions which shall force him to take into account wider considerations of a similar kind; to sympathise with men even though they use different symbols for communication, and to respect other claims upon his loyalty than those which are associated with military leadership. The morality impressed upon a man is not always, perhaps it is never, absolutely right—that is, it is never an absolutely correct impression of the ideal qualities; but it must be almost always an approximate expression, and capable generally of reconciliation by a simple widening of the field of view.

34. In the next place, the true school of morality is the family, which represents a mode of association altogether closer, more intimate than any other, and in which there is not the same possibility of deviation from the moral code. The moral quality of every man is determined to a very great extent in his infancy. We learn our morality, not from books and lessons, but in the nursery, or at our mother's knee, or from intercourse with our brothers and sisters. There it is that the core of character is fixed, and that the deepest organic qualities are permanently stamped upon us. The essential part of our education, we may say, is that which we receive in the stage of absolute dependence upon others. The adult, it is true, acquires passions of which the infant was incapable, but it is still through the family relations that they are principally disciplined. The purity of the domestic relations is the essential guarantee for a most important class of virtues, and the family is moulded and determined by the discipline to which they are subject. The sympathies, again, receive their chief stimulus through the domestic relations and it is in the sphere of the family that we normally find a degree of altruism which is scarcely to be expected elsewhere. The love of a mother is the typical and central virtue of which all others seem to be faint reflections. It is, as I have said, in the family that the binding forces which hold society together come as it were to the surface, and are directly visible without admixture of any ties of an

inferior order of intimacy; and therefore the family is the main organ of morality.

35. This familiar fact gives the historical explanation of the moral sense in so far as it shows how the development of the conscience naturally takes place. It shows further, I think, what is to be regarded as the true form of morality. The child has become a moral agent as it has learned self-restraint, sympathy, truthfulness in the special concrete case. It knows nothing whatever of society at large, or of the formulas sanctioned by moral philosophers. It is a good child because it loves its parents and has imbibed certain organic instincts around which all later developments of feeling group themselves spontaneously. The assumed end of moral conduct has never been presented to it, and cannot supply it with a motive. It has never thought of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, nor is it capable of *a priori* deductions or categorical imperatives. If the morality taught is avowedly based upon some theological dogma, the child can only conceive of the Deity as an invisible father, or perhaps as an invisible being who always approves the paternal commands. What gives the real force to the moral teaching which it may receive is the stimulus given to its affections by its actual intercourse with the little microcosm which bounds its intellectual vision. In what sense, then, is the morality of the child determined by conditions of social welfare? Obviously not by any conscious appreciation of those conditions. As obviously the conditions may be called operative in this sense, that as the social tissue is composed of human beings, whose most intimate bond is the family relation, the conditions of social welfare are necessarily coincident with the general conditions of family welfare. So far as men are better husbands, fathers, and sons, and women better wives, mothers, and daughters, society is in a more wholesome condition. Every variation in the strength and purity of the family relations implies a corresponding variation in the stability of the society at large. As the cohesion of a whole tissue depends upon the cohesion of the compound molecules of which it is built up, so the society depends upon

the family; whatever qualities are useful in one relation are useful in the other. The good child becomes the good man by simply widening its sphere of sympathy, exerting the same qualities under a new stimulus, and generalising in its other relations the same principles which it has applied in the nursery.

36. This statement, indeed, requires to be guarded. It is obvious, and I certainly should not seek to evade the admission, that the family affections, like those which are generated in any wider association, may lead to a kind of compound selfishness. As a man's patriotism may make him a bad cosmopolitan, or his attachment to a particular church may make him intolerant of other religions, so his love to his family may make him a corrupt judge or an avaricious tradesman. Fathers of families are capable, it is said, of anything; that is, of any amount of injustice to others. And, again, it is of course a commonplace that the domestic relations incapacitate a man for heroic action either of the good or bad. A man's fondness for his children may make him less disposed to run risks for the good of his race. It follows that the domestic virtues are not a sufficient condition of virtue in general. This, of course, is undeniable, but it does not conflict with the principle as properly understood. For, in the first place, though domestic virtue does not of necessity imply public virtue in a corresponding degree, it implies some moral qualities. What is essentially bad in other social relations is bad, if not permanently bad, in the family relations. To be a good member of a family, a man must practise the duties of chastity, temperance, truthfulness, and of kindliness and justice to at least his immediate surroundings. He must have taken the great step of crossing the tremendous gulf which separates each man from the rest of the universe; and that gulf once crossed, all further advance is a question of time and cultivation of the sympathies. The question remains, What will be the law of the sympathies? The purely egoistic form may of course observe the external law of domestic virtue as of other virtues; he may be kind to his wife as to his horse, with an exclusive view to his own com-

fort; but in that case his virtue is an outside sham which will disappear when accident divides the interests of the persons related to him. But admitting the reality of altruism, we must also admit that it is naturally stimulated in the family case at the earliest period of life, and that family affections are both the type and the root of all truly altruistic feeling. As soon as we are affected by the sorrow of our brothers, we can be really moved by the sorrow of any other human being who comes into any relation to us. We have the raw material of the moral sense, which will afterwards be developed and regulated by our position in the whole social organism. The development in different cases of course varies greatly. Some men have very strong affections for those whom they see, and very weak sympathies for the distant, because, perhaps, the imaginative faculty is weak; whilst in other cases the relation is reversed. The affection in the particular case does not of itself determine the law of the affection in other cases, and that will vary according to individual idiosyncrasies. If my affection for my family rests upon genuine altruism, then so far as I am reasonable I shall sympathise with others in so far as I am able to realise their feelings, and to my power of being useful to them, that is, of giving a practical effect to my feelings. That is, as I love my brother I shall love others, and discharge whatever duties arise from other relations. If I love him only in name, and am kind to him only to gain some advantage to myself, then, of course, I am a good brother and a good friend only in name. To ask how far the domestic affection will prompt to others is to ask how far it is real.

37. Thus we may say that, if we start from the general point of view, the organisation of society implies a certain distribution of functions which has been gradually elaborated in obedience to the general conditions of welfare. As a certain constitution of the family is bound up in the very structure of the social tissue, all other relations have been developed with reference to these primary relations. And therefore, if a man acted with an explicit reference to the welfare of the whole organisation, he would necessarily acquire

the characteristics essential to the good son, husband, and father, as well as those essential to the good citizen, soldier, or craftsman. The whole problem has been worked out by a single process, and therefore every part of the organism has been developed with reference to the rest. But if we start from the opposite or individual point of view, which necessarily corresponds to the historical development in each particular case, the character is developed through the immediate surroundings; the man learns to be affectionate, truthful, and so forth through his relation to his own little world, without being even able for a long time to apprehend the general principle, and so acquires the qualities which fit him for other relations as he comes to be sensible of them and required to act on them. Whether we start from the whole and argue to the constituent part or reverse the process, we come to the same conclusion, though what is laid down as an explicit principle in one case is implicitly assumed in the other, and gradually evolved in the process of life.

38. And further, it must of course be admitted that in many particular cases the duties may conflict. The general qualities which fit a man for excellence in the various relations of life are identical, so far as the moralist can take notice of them, but he cannot say what weight is to be given to special considerations in given cases. It is plain that so far as a man acts as a judge, he must not be moved by the interests of his family; and the same character which causes a man to act justly as a father will make him act justly as a judge, for he will feel that such conduct is imposed upon him by the claims of the wider organism, and he will not wish that his children more than himself should be helped by corrupt actions. But it is not possible to lay down a general moral principle which shall decide whether a man should devote himself to a domestic or a public career. For, in the first place, it involves the difficult question of facts as to which career will be the most useful, and, in the next place, the answer must partly depend upon the individual character. If a man's affections are strong but narrow, he will be better fitted for one position; if diffusive and lively, better fitted for another; and we cannot

say which man is the most moral. Such discussions really take us beyond the sphere of morality into questions of prudence, which can generally be decided by nothing but instinctive tact.

39. For my immediate purpose I have gone far enough. The moral law being, in brief, conformity to the conditions of social welfare, conscience is the name of the intrinsic motives to such conformity. So far as we feel ourselves to be members of any social organisation and identify ourselves with it, we are, in virtue of that sentiment, prompted to this conformity and feel a sense of obligation. In this way a kind of subordinate conscience is formed in regard to even the more cursory forms of association, and still more in regard to the more permanent and conspicuous, through which our stronger instincts are gratified. When public spirit imposes upon us sacrifices to our country, we are actuated by a feeling which is of the same kind as conscience, and is often indistinguishably blended with it. But it is the peculiarity of the moral law that it belongs to us, not in any special capacity, but as belonging to the indefinite and formless organisation of the race at large. On the other hand, although this organisation has no form or definite limits, we are in the closest possible contact with it, and it is the underlying substance of all other associations, and especially as the main bonds which hold it together are those of the family relations. Our whole character is moulded from our earliest infancy by the family tie, and the conformation of character so impressed upon us carries with it the wider moral sensibilities. The conscience, therefore, is not a separate faculty which responds only to a special set of stimuli, but is a compound feeling to which all the strongest instincts of our nature contribute. Through our affections for our friends and our brothers our feelings are stamped and moulded, and prepared to be developed under the action of all the other relations into which we are brought, as our intellects and sympathies expand and our passions come into play. In this way the primary instincts undergo modifications, causing them to act in certain ways, and to obey certain rules which have necessarily a moral quality, or, in

other words, a definite relation to the conditions of social welfare. The perception that this rule is formed by something outside us, that we imbibe it from the medium in which we live, gives the sense of obligation, though we may become conscious of it as the expression of instincts which have grown up before distinct reflection, and are involved in all our modes of thought and feeling. And as the process of working it into our character is always more or less imperfect, we have, as a rule, plenty of opportunities for finding that obedience costs an effort, though disobedience may bring with it a pang. The conscience is the utterance of the public spirit of the race, ordering us to obey the primary conditions of its welfare, and it acts not the less forcibly though we may not understand the source of its authority or the end at which it is aiming.

40. I will conclude by applying this to the particular case of maternal love, which seems to be as well the purest type as an original germ of virtue. It has been denied by sage philosophers that it is a virtue at all, and this because it is an instinct, which therefore implies at most a compound selfishness, and involves no explicit recognition of the general principle of morality. A mother is not good because she loves her children, but would be virtuous if she deduced the duty of doing good to them from some abstract principle—from the doctrine that you must act so that your rule may be a rule for all, or again from the belief that by doing them good she was acting from a wise calculation of her own greatest interest, or of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. I hold, on the contrary, that a mother who loves her children is so far good, though happily she has not much merit, as the virtue is a very common one, and therefore that it is more accurate to say that a mother who does not love her children is very bad. But how is this admission of the instinctive character of the virtue to be reconciled with the doctrine that it is reasonable as the embodiment of a general principle in a particular case? My answer is that we must distinguish two closely allied questions. If you ask, 'Why is maternal love a virtue?' the answer is, 'Because it is essential to social welfare'; because, in other words, the vitality of every society from the earliest

period is dependent upon the vigorous action of this instinct. The same consideration shows that, though an essential, it is not a sufficient condition of virtue. The love for infants must be controlled by some interest in others. It can be controlled by the wider instinct generally because the instinct springs from the same root, and the sympathy excited in the mother by the dependent infant is homogeneous with her sympathy for other infants, and for all to whom she can render services. The altruism, again, which is thus generated becomes, in a mind capable of reflection, the conscious acceptance of the general principle, which of course receives additional strength when it is explicitly announced as part of the fundamental conviction of the society. It is reinforced by all the other motives, which are enabled to co-operate with it because society is so developed as to secure their normal coincidence. In this sense, then, the general condition may be stated as determining the moral character of the instinct: it is essential, and perceived to be essential, to social welfare, and therefore (for this is the only reason we can give) it is a virtue, and a recognised virtue. But if we look at the case from the opposite side, and ask for the mother's reason of action, we must invert the order of the deduction. The mother loves because she is so constituted as to be capable of loving, and because she is part of a society in which the instinct is stimulated and fostered. For her the love is its own justification; she has the sentiment, and need look no further. The wider love which she comes to feel for others is not the cause of the narrower instinct, but the product when it comes to be enlightened and extended; and the conscientious feeling itself which sanctions and strengthens the primary instinct is not something which exists independently, but which springs from the instinct as developed through the emotions and the imbibation of the social instincts. The cause, in other words, must be found in the social utility; the reason in the individual constitution as developed by the social life.

41. And this leads to a new division of the subject. I have started from the condition of social welfare, and tried to show how this implies the growth of a sense of obligation in

its constituent members; but now we must start from the opposite pole; each man has to be regarded as acting from his instincts, however it may have come to pass that he has those instincts, and therefore as acting with an immediate reference to his happiness. Whence we have to inquire what is the relation between morality and happiness, which I shall proceed to do in the next two chapters.

# CHAPTER IX

## HAPPINESS AS A CRITERION

### 1. *Utilitarianism*

1. The phrase 'utility,' I have remarked, has a double sense. Conduct may be called 'useful' as it contributes to the preservation of the agent, or as it contributes to his happiness; and it is an essential part of the evolution theory that these two characteristics must approximately coincide; that is, that there must be a correlation between the pernicious and the painful on the one hand, and on the other between the beneficial and the agreeable. By applying this principle to the social organism, we have come to the conclusion that the development of the society implies the development of certain moral instincts in the individual, or that the individual must be so constituted as to be capable of identifying himself with the society, and of finding his pleasure and pain in conduct which is socially beneficial or pernicious. The necessary condition for morality is altruism. The altruistic person is moulded and modified by the society of which he forms a part, and acquires the moral sense which implies a certain intellectual and emotional constitution. But the facts may be equally regarded from the opposite point of view. Conduct, we say, is a function of character and circumstance. If we ask, 'Why does a man act in such a way under given circumstances?' the immediate answer must always be in the form, 'Because it is pleasant,' or, in other words, because it gratifies some of the instincts which together form his character. This must in all cases give the reason of his conduct. But if we choose to go further and ask, 'Why is it pleasant?' the answer must be given by showing how his character comes to

be constituted in this particular way; and the only explanation that can be given is the exposition of the relations which the agent bears to the whole system of which he forms a part. 'Why do I eat?' To satisfy hunger. 'Why do I hunger?' Because I am constituted in such a way that the consumption of, and, therefore, the desire for, food is essential to my life. In this case I assign (so far as it can be assigned) the cause of my conduct. The problem hitherto considered has corresponded to this last question. We have asked what is the cause of the development of morality, and we have answered by reference to the social organism. We have still to ask what is the reason of morality, or what are the motives which operate upon the individual.

2. A moral agent must have a reason for moral action, and the reason must clearly have some relation to his happiness. The conduct must be always that in which he finds happiness at the time, and the 'end' must always be either his own happiness or the happiness of others. If, in fact, the preservation of the race meant the continuance of misery; if, like Milton's devils, we were kept in existence in order—

> Strongly to suffer and endure our woes,'

we could not reasonably desire existence. We have, therefore, to justify morality both as happiness-giving and as life-preserving. If the ends necessarily diverged, we should get into considerable difficulties; but, as I have urged, the very principle of evolution implies that there must be at least an approximate coincidence, and there is no apparent *a priori* reason why the coincidence should not be indefinitely close. The pessimist indeed may regard life as essentially miserable. He escapes from the conclusion that annihilation is desirable by declaring that it is impossible. All that is left for us upon his showing is to minimise the misery which cannot be annulled. His morality, therefore, aims at what is equivalent to a maximum of happiness, although he states it in the opposite form of a minimum of misery. With this question, at any rate, I am not for the present concerned. I assume that, in any case, we are invariably determined by pain and pleasure,

though it is equally true that our pain and pleasure have a necessary relation to the tendency of the corresponding conduct to our preservation or destruction. We have now to ask how the moral rule can be constructed from this secondary point of view, always bearing in mind the condition defined by the primary. The rules which formerly appeared as conditions of maintaining the vigour of the race will now appear as conditions of securing its happiness. We have to inquire how the two are related; whether the rule constructed on the one principle coincides necessarily, and how far it coincides, with that constructed on the other; and under what condition that which is the cause of moral conduct will or will not supply an adequate reason or motive for such conduct to the agent. This, in the utilitarian phraseology which now becomes appropriate, is to inquire into the criterion and the sanction of morality; and in this chapter I shall speak of the first of these problems.

3. Utilitarianism is the system which endeavours to construct the moral rule exclusively from the principle of happiness, and I propose to ask briefly what modification must be imposed upon this system in order to make it square with the theory here adopted. The general assumption upon which it proceeds may be easily laid down. Happiness is the sole end of conduct; the 'utility' of an action is its tendency to produce happiness; its morality is measured by its utility; that conduct is right which produces most happiness, and by this we must be understood to mean which produces most happiness on the average; for since we can seldom calculate more than a small part of the consequences of any action, we are forced to act upon rules corresponding to the general limits of observation. We find that, on an average, certain kinds of conduct increase and others diminish happiness. We have to act upon this probability, and thus we attain the moral law. 'This action is wrong,' means that, on an average, this action causes a balance of misery. Further, the motive to morality must be the motive, whatever it may be, which makes us desire to promote the general happiness. Here utilitarians divide, according as they do or do not admit the reality of unselfish

impulses. The egoistic utilitarian holds that we desire to promote the happiness of others because we shall in some way promote our own happiness; the altruistic holds that the desire of happiness to others may be an ultimate motive.

4. Although this doctrine is, as I shall presently argue, unsatisfactory as a complete account of morality, it contains, as I think, a core of inexpugnable truth. A great deal is said about the vagueness of the word 'happiness' and the impossibility of devising a calculus for determining the effect of conduct upon happiness. The criticism would be conclusive if utilitarianism required any such calculus. If I attempted to lay down rules for the whole conduct of life, and to say whether in any given case this or that course will give a maximum of pleasure, I should be hopelessly at a loss. On the one side the vast complexity of consequences, on the other the vast variety of tastes, would make it impossible to give trustworthy rules. There is no hope that we shall ever construct a pocket calculating machine which will tell us by a short and easy method what is the path to happiness. But, then, this very uncertainty is an essential part of the utilitarian contention. It is just because the calculation is so hopelessly intricate that we are forced to trust to rules formed from an average, and that we can obtain so very few of such rules. The moral law can only give us a few very simple indications, because our powers of calculating happiness are so limited. In order, therefore, to make the objection valid, it must be shown that our uncertainty is so great as to extend to the consequences of moral behaviour. We must show that there is such a thing as a law, admitted to be moral, and yet of doubtful effects upon happiness. If there be such a thing, we shall hardly hear of it from the other schools of morality, for they are at least as anxious as their opponents to show that morality produces happiness. Nobody, indeed, will seriously profess any doubt that cruelty, lying, sensuality, and so forth, do diminish the stock of happiness. Many people deny that the mischief is the ground or the sole ground of our condemnation, but they do not deny, or rather they solemnly assert, the reality of the mischief. If, then, they admit the

fact that wickedness causes misery and virtue happiness, they cannot attack the utilitarian for holding that the fact is ascertainable. If we can know for certain that morality produces happiness, the utilitarian who makes it consist in producing happiness cannot be accused of placing morality upon an uncertain base. The truth upon which he rests is admitted by his antagonists, and they cannot consistently argue that it is a truth which cannot be known. Yet more, if it can be ascertained that any class of conduct increases or diminishes the general sum of happiness, all moralists admit that it is so far right. If it were proved that certain conduct did no harm to anybody, that conduct could hardly be wrong. The duty of benevolence orders us to increase happiness, and happiness is *per se* a good thing, though there may be contingent objections upon other grounds to particular kinds of happiness. The question, therefore, of the tendency of actions to produce happiness cannot be irrelevant to its morality, nor can we deny that moral conduct has that tendency, or that conduct proved to possess it thereby becomes moral. So far as this is the substance of a good many attacks upon the utilitarian, I think that he is perfectly capable of holding his own, and has a good solid basis of fact from which it would be rash to attempt to dislodge him. Crime is mischievous ; it causes bodily and mental agony ; it is the great source of all human suffering, and it is bad for that plain and undeniable reason. If you could get rid of the reason you would find it very hard to substitute any other of equal cogency. And, indeed, the utilitarian argument appears from a certain point of view to be so cogent, that one is half disposed to regard all the argumentation about morality as grotesque. Can it be necessary to go into such elaborate reasoning to account for the fact that men have generally agreed to condemn the practice of cutting each other's throats ? Why should not they ?

5. Yet, when we try to answer more explicitly the various criticisms that have been so frequently and forcibly expressed, we become sensible that the utilitarian position requires at least re-statement or reconstruction. The system has been attacked as giving an inadequate account of all the most

essential characteristics of the moral law. It is said, in the first place, that since morality depends upon the calculus of happiness, since men's conceptions of happiness vary within almost indefinite limits, and since the tendency of actions to produce particular kinds of happiness is only to be discovered by examining a vast variety of complex phenomena which elude all scientific inquiry, the rules which result must necessarily be arbitrary or indefinitely fluctuating. If at a given moment they take one shape, there is no assignable reason why they should not take another at any other time or place. Since, again, we start from individual conceptions of happiness, and we have no more reason for assigning special importance to the judgment of one man than to that of any other, or of preferring the estimate of the saint to the estimate of the sinner, the standard which results from the average judgment must be an inferior or debasing standard. Further, since on this hypothesis the morality of conduct is essentially dependent upon its consequences—that is, upon something different from the action itself—we must always be led to an external moral code. Evil cannot be objectionable as evil or good desirable as good, but we must always consider morality as a means to some ulterior end; and thus the very essence of virtue is destroyed; a conscience becomes superfluous; and hence, finally, the moral law of the utilitarian can never get beyond expediency. There is always some other condition by reference to which we must decide upon any particular line of conduct, and therefore the moral rule, though it may serve as a useful indication of what is to be done in average cases, cannot be a supreme and absolute rule, deciding what is to be done in all cases. Hence all the specific characteristics of which we took account in framing our theory of morality are more or less destroyed; for though the utilitarian can provide a kind of substitute for the various qualities described, he can only make an outward show of morality, and run up an edifice which looks like the everlasting structure, but falls to pieces at the first touch. He may call his code moral, but in fact it is a code which has neither permanence nor supremacy, nor uniformity nor unconditional validity.

## II. *The Evolutionist Criterion*

6. I have already given by anticipation my answers to these charges, if applied to the moral system which I am defending. The system, however, according to many thinkers, is simply the old dog in a new doublet. I propose, therefore, to consider more precisely how far the evolutionist morality can meet the theories which have some cogency as against the older utilitarianism. Utilitarianism, let us note in the first place, springs from the mode of speculation which renounces as much as possible every *a priori* method, and rejects all 'intuitions' or supposed logical necessities of thought, in order to base morality upon pure experience. The tendency of the utilitarian is therefore to consider knowledge in general as conforming to the type of that purely empirical knowledge in which the experience of a former coincidence of two distinct phenomena is the sole basis for our expectation of a future coincidence. Carrying out this principle as far as possible, reasoning is essentially a process of associating ideas, and the association, though practically indissoluble in some cases, is regarded as always potentially dissoluble. The logical result is atomism, or the reduction of every kind of organised system, whether of 'ideas,' regarded as existing in the mind, or of the objects external to the mind and represented by the ideas, to an aggregate of independent units, capable of indefinite analysis in the mind, or of being taken to pieces and reconstructed in reality. All *a priori* truths, therefore, disappear; and as so-called *a priori* truths may be unverified and erroneous assumptions, the application of a thoroughgoing analysis is at least useful provisionally, even if the scepticism to which it leads should not be ultimately justifiable. Further, as it is the tendency of thinkers of this class to account for all differences between two organisms as in some sense due to 'circumstances,' they are forced by a logical necessity to assume the existence of uniform atoms upon which the circumstances operate. The difference, for example, between two men being due to the various associations, and not to those innate tendencies of character which are suspected of an

affinity to 'innate ideas,' we must suppose that there is a uniform man—a colourless sheet of paper or primitive atom—upon whom all qualities are imposed by the circumstances under which he is placed. This assumption, in fact, plays a considerable part in some utilitarian theories.

7. The existence of assumptions more or less explicitly accepted explains the general tendency of the school, as it may help to render intelligible some of their shortcomings. Society, according to that doctrine, is an aggregate built up of the uniform atoms called men. The only primitive property which can be attributed to man is the desire for happiness; and we must conceive of happiness as a kind of emotional currency, capable of being calculated and distributed in 'lots,' which have a certain definite value independent of any special taste of the individual. Conduct, then, is moral or immoral according as it tends to swell or diminish the volume of this hypothetical currency. Pains and pleasures can be handed about like pieces of money, and we have simply to calculate how to gain a maximum of pleasure and a minimum of pain. I have certainly no desire to fix down the utilitarian to any extreme form of his theory, or to pursue some grotesque consequences to which it is occasionally applied. The criticisms which I shall consider are those which seem to me to be applicable to the essence of the doctrine.

8. The criterion thus suggested is, in fact, liable to one criticism which appears to me to be decisive so far as it applies, and to show the real limitations of the method; I mean that it fails to take into account an essential condition of any tenable theory, and that precisely because it refuses to take into account the true nature of the social organism, and considers it a simple combination of independent atoms. The utilitarian argument would be perfectly relevant if we could take each action by itself, sum up its consequences, and then generalise as to the actions of the class. So, for example, I find that eating green fruit is always followed by a painful sensation. I resolve to abstain; and if all other men made the same remark, they would, if wise, follow my resolution; assuming, of course, that the subsequent pain was clearly

greater than the immediate pleasure, and that no counterbalancing advantages were observable. We may argue in the same way about murder, stealing, lying, drunkenness and so forth. They do infinite mischief, and mischief which clearly overbalances the pleasure. We judge that they diminish the sum of happiness, and I have no doubt that our judgment of utility is so implicated in the moral judgment that one could not change without a corresponding change in the other. But it is also true that our judgment as to the effects of immoral conduct are very inadequately represented by this simple and direct process. The primary evil of murder thus estimated is the pain suffered by the victim, against which, if we take happiness as good *per se*, we must set off the pleasure of the murderer. If morality is to be defined by happiness, we must of course allow all kinds of happiness to count, and to count equally so far as they are actually equal. We must reckon the pleasures of malevolence as well as those of benevolence. Allowing that the balance inclines, even upon this showing, against the practice, the calculation seems insufficient to justify the strength of the general prejudice. We amend our argument, therefore, by taking into account the secondary or ulterior consequences, and especially the shock to the general sense of security. We may possibly object, again, to allowing the murderer's pleasure to count, because a motive which implies pleasure in the infliction of pain is a mischievous motive, and therefore whatever pleasure it may produce is bought at a price to society at large. But it is now evident that we must take into account a consideration hitherto neglected—namely, the existence of a certain social order, and of a corresponding character in the individual constituents; for as the shock to the sense of security is undoubtedly an important item in the account, the shock is proportioned to the existence of a certain standard of mutual confidence. Murder means, speaking briefly, killing by private persons. The executioner and the soldier may kill under certain circumstances; and though war may be denounced by hasty theorists as wholesale murder, the distinction is important, for war does not in the same way imply a dis-

integration of a social order, but is, on the contrary, an essential part of the process by which that order has been built up. It is easy to propose the summary abolition of war, and we all hope that it may be abolished; but all men, except a few enthusiasts, can see that to propose its abolition is to propose a complete social and moral reconstruction. It is not an excrescence which can be simply dropped, but the result of processes essential to the growth of society in certain stages. What is true of war is equally true of murder. At an early period the distinction between public and private killing is unintelligible, and for want of an organisation fitted to suppress individual conflicts, men must be allowed to fight out their own quarrels, and to act in the way which we should afterwards (that is, when a law has been developed) describe as 'taking the law into their own hands.' Again, it is quite true that the murderer in the present day is a malevolent and therefore mischievous individual, whose gratification is not desirable because it inflicts more evils than are compensated by his pleasure. But this, again, is virtually to assert that a social development has been evoked in which the pugnacious instincts are so mischievous that they can be placed under certain restraints. At an earlier period, when there was not a residentiary police, the calculus of happiness would be materially different. The murderer would not be injuring a sense of security which did not in fact exist—perhaps would even be discharging a necessary function; nor, again, would the pain of the sufferer be the same, nor the pleasure derived from the killing be indicative of so mischievous a character.

9. It follows, then, that the direct application of the calculus omits a most essential element in the calculation. Let us note—for the point is one of vital importance—what are the tacit assumptions involved. The utilitarian or individualist considers society to be formed of an aggregate of similar human beings. The character of each molecule is regarded as constant. The only difference which he considers to be relevant in a moral sense consists in a more or less exhaustive and accurate calculation of the consequences of

actions. That society, therefore, will enjoy the greatest happiness which has the clearest perception of these consequences, and consequently enforces the corresponding rule; for we at present assume that a perception of the evil leads to its suppression. Now at any given moment, as character varies slowly and the social relations may be taken as approximately fixed, this gives an approximately accurate test; that is to say, the consequences of immoral conduct generally involve misery, and the further we trace them the more evident is the fact. But when we try to frame something like a scientific criterion from such considerations, we become sensible of the inadequacy of the statement. For the consequences can only be traced when we recognise the nature of the social structure, which again implies the existence of a certain stage of individual development, and neither of these is deducible from the properties of the assumed unit. Human nature is not a constant, but, on the contrary, a variable, and the aim of the moralist is precisely to modify it. The problem changes in our hands as we consider it. If, in fact, we ask what are to be considered as the consequences, it is plain at once that we cannot make an arbitrary selection of the most obvious and prominent. What are the consequences of a murder? To answer fully we must know what would be implied by the murder not happening, including the consequences to the persons, to society at large, and all that follows from the implied change in the character of the murderer. What are the consequences of a certain frequency of murder? All that is implied in the difference between a society where murder is frequent and one in which it is not frequent. This, again, implies a complete structural change, the consequences of which reach indefinitely beyond this particular mischief. To suppress murder is to civilise a society; and unless we take into account the laws of social growth, it is impossible to say what is included in civilisation.

10. The utilitarian criterion, again, is frequently presented in the form of a maximum. Morality is conduct tending to produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number. But a maximum is meaningless unless we assume certain fixed

conditions. Here we must mean the greatest happiness *possible*, and therefore possible on a certain assumption. But on what assumption? The assumption of the fixity of human nature. But that alone is insufficient. It would lead to such conclusions as this: that the society was happiest in which there were fewest murders, whatever the cause of their rarity. But this is at least a doubtful truth, since violence may be diminished as well by diminution of energy as by an increase of peacefulness, and the bare elimination of particular practices gives a totally inadequate measure of social welfare. Doubtless a diminution of certain evils will be a symptom of social progress after a certain stage, but it is not a measure of the whole complex process. If, then, we suppose that a given stage has in fact been reached, and that on comparing two societies at that stage, that will be the happiest in which there are the fewest murders, we are making a tenable proposition, and one which is undoubtedly of vast importance. But it has an appearance of being arbitrary, because we take for granted the existence of certain instincts as an ultimate fact; and therefore, though excluding intuitions, we are virtually assuming the existence of a certain disposition, whilst we make no attempt to justify our assumption. We prove that, under given circumstances, murder is on the average objectionable, but we do not attempt to state what is the cause of its badness, or to state the general principle upon which we are proceeding. It may always be argued that we are biassed by certain prejudices which are more or less arbitrary, or which, in other words, might be changed without injury to the general happiness. We object to murder because in the existing state of society it does more harm than good. But suppose we get rid of some of the feelings concerned, might we not be the happier on the whole? To answer this we are thrown back upon the previous case, and have to compare the amount of happiness in two societies agreeing only in the circumstance that both are composed of men, which seems to render the whole problem too intricate and indeterminate for practical application.

11. Consider for a moment what is perhaps something

more than an analogous case. So far as our physical constitution is concerned, the only conceivable motive is the attainment of pleasure. We may say, therefore, that a man acts most wisely—considered simply as an animal—who acts so as to obtain the maximum of pleasure. But if we should seek to frame a rule of life directly from this consideration, we should fall into infinite perplexity. We must obviously say, in fact, that he must act with reference to his constitution. Pleasure is not a separate thing independently of his special organisation. The bare rule, 'Get as much pleasure as you can,' is unintelligible unless we proceed further and point out some of the conditions which must be observed. Each instinct, for example, must have its turn, and their respective provinces must be determined by the general organic balance. We can undoubtedly point out that certain modes of conduct produce pain and others pleasure, and this is a *primâ facie* reason, at least, for avoiding one and accepting the other. But, again, some pains imply a remedial process, whilst others imply disease: and the conduct which increases them may therefore be either wise or foolish in the highest degree. For the simple rule, therefore, 'Get the most pleasure,' we must substitute the general rule, 'Preserve health.' The two rules plainly coincide very closely. The healthiest man is generally the happiest, and therefore the best and only general rule for securing physical pleasure is, 'Be healthy.' No doubt some kind of rule might be constructed by aiming at happiness. We may recommend temperance, for example, because we observed as a truth that intemperance is generally followed by a headache, and the practice of intemperance by all the pains of various diseases. But we are then tacitly referring to the organic conditions which are summed up by saying that intemperance is inconsistent with health. This, therefore, whether explicitly or implicitly stated, is a necessary element in our statement, and gives the only general criterion. We wish for health, it may be, only as a condition of pleasure, but the only general rule for obtaining pleasure is to secure this general condition. If we tried directly to sum up the various kinds of pleasure, to compare the value, to

discover how far they were compatible, and to decide how much we should take of each, we should embark upon a hopelessly complicated undertaking, which is made needless by the single consideration that the process is in all cases conditioned by the maintenance of the organic condition called health. The organism has solved the problem for us approximately. It has come to be so constituted that what is pleasant is approximately wholesome. We start with that assumption, and correct the errors by the inverse conclusion that what is wholesome is in the long run also productive of most pleasure.

12. This, as it seems to me, represents the real difference between the utilitarian and the evolutionist criterion. The one lays down as a criterion the happiness, the other the health of the society. The two are not really divergent; on the contrary, they necessarily tend to coincide; but the latter satisfies the conditions of a scientific criterion in a sense in which the former fails. I desire happiness. I discover by experience that this or that particular set of conditions makes me happy, and by degrees I learn how to divide myself amongst different impulses, and so to obtain certain general rules of happiness. But to obtain any germ of a scientific theory I must turn from without to within; the law of happiness will appear as simple only when it is regarded as a law in terms of the state of the single individual who goes through all these various experiences. The external conditions of happiness are multitudinous and incapable of summation, but they must all agree in this, that they stimulate me in a manner consistent with the laws of my being, in the unity of which they are combined and correlated. Therefore the general rule must be a rule relative to my state, and briefly the law of my health. What is true of the individual is true in proportion of the much vaguer and less coherent social organism. We obtain unity of principle when we consider, not the various external relations, but the internal condition of the organism. The conditions might conceivably be laid down either by saying that the various social functions are discharged and the relation between the social organs maintained in a certain

equilibrium, or by trying to sum up all the various modes of conduct which produce happiness to its various members; but we only get a tenable and simple law when we start from the structure, which is itself a unit.

13. Hence, again, we obtain a rule which is fixed and elastic in the right place. An organism may be healthy or diseased at any period of its growth, and the laws of health or disease will be continuous, although varying within limits as the organism itself varies. But if we take the direct utilitarian criterion, it seems to be rigid and yet indefinitely variable in different directions. For as human nature is taken as a constant, we should always have the same rule of conduct; and yet as men's thoughts and feelings are supposed to be indefinitely variable in obedience to accidental association, we seem to have no guarantee for the permanence of any moral criterion. In fact, utilitarian moralists have dwelt upon the variations of the moral standard in order to prove the necessity of resting morality upon experience and to get rid of *a priori* intuitions. They have dwelt upon the same facts in order to justify a belief in human perfectibility. Yet surely if human nature is in this sense so modifiable, we have no guarantee for expecting amelioration rather than deterioration. And if, as I have said, human nature is regarded as in some sense a constant, the science of morality, which should be rigidly deducible from its properties, can hardly be realised when the human material is capable of being worked up into indefinitely varying forms. It is in substituting for these contradictory examples the conception of a slowly developing social organism that the evolution philosophy has rendered the greatest service to ethics, as the variations become themselves deducible under a fixed rule, and the necessity of recognising the social organism as something not formed by simple mechanical combination restores the due authority to social instincts without elevating them into transcendental intuitions.

14. Briefly, then, I regard utilitarianism as giving what may be called instantaneous morality. It corresponds to the way in which men actually reason and are justified in reasoning provisionally as to moral questions. We see that a certain

social arrangement or regulation produces bad and good effects. We try roughly to sum them up, and to regulate or repeal accordingly. Our moral judgments are in all cases determined by these observations, or must be in conformity with them. Any class of conduct which clearly produces a balance of misery is so far bad, and that which produces a balance of happiness is so far good. A constant and steady attempt to get rid of the misery-causing, and to encourage the happiness-causing activities is the condition of all moral progress. In order to modify any moral law or any social arrangement, we try to show that it actually causes some misery, and that its modification would produce more happiness. I do not see that any other mode of argument has ever any real efficiency. The actual progress in morality is always determined at every point by utilitarian considerations. But when we try to generalise from this, and to say that the form of morality or the criterion of moral conduct is the tendency to produce happiness, we get into difficulties. The reason is that already given. We are generalising in such a way as to omit an essential condition of an accurate statement. We are taking constants for variables and variables for constants. If we compare any two organisms, we assume a certain organic identity. Both of them, we suppose, have a certain fixed core of instincts, and corresponding habits which define their essential character. It is also capable of varying in a subordinate degree compatibly with the uniformity of these fundamental organic relations. Now we may say that any conduct which produces pain is so far bad. So far as the being is capable of intelligent observation, it may classify the various kinds of conduct as they lead to painful or pleasurable conditions, and its action will be determined accordingly. On the other side, pain implies a certain condition of the organism itself which we may call morbid as depending upon a deviation from the normal equilibrium. The being itself must be so constituted that the conditions of pleasure coincide closely with the conditions of health. So far, therefore, that is, whilst we assume an identity of organic relations, the two rules will coincide; those which cause pain are bad, and those which

cause morbid action are bad. The internal and the external law approximately coincide. The external rule assumes indeed the existence of a certain internal constitution, but as that is fixed it does not require to be expressly stated. But now we suppose a new instinct to be required ; we perceive that certain conduct produces pain on an average, and we therefore propose to eliminate it. It cannot be simply left out, because we are dealing with an organism, and every such change involves an action upon the whole constitution. The organic relations, therefore, are themselves changed, and we substitute virtually a new organism for the old. The new, we may assume, is on the whole more efficient than its predecessor, and represents a more complete solution of the general problem of life. As it has new sensibilities, it no longer estimates happiness in the same way as the old. If we compare the two, we must not suppose that we have an identical being placed in different circumstances and making different estimates of happiness, but two different beings, with different measures of happiness. The difference is not represented by a more complete attainment of the same ends, but by a change in the end itself, and a greater total efficiency of the whole new system. The common rule is that each organism is better as it obeys the conditions of health, but we cannot found any common rule upon the happiness, the standard of which changes as the organism itself changes.

15. In this sense the growth of the social organism is precisely analogous to that of the individual. The development of the animal implies the slow acquisition of new instincts, which in time become part of its organic constitution. Whilst they are not fully organised they determine its conduct more or less by the pain and pleasure with which they are associated, and they tend to become fixed as they imply on the whole a superior or more efficient form of organisation. The moral instincts of the society correspond in the same way to the social development, and express at every instant the judgment formed of the happiness and misery caused by corresponding modes of conduct. As they become organised the whole society becomes more efficiently consti-

tuted, and its standard of happiness is also modified. We may therefore say that at any period the utilitarian judgment must be satisfied. Given a certain stage of social development, the society will be in a healthier state and the general happiness greater in proportion as it is moral. But since the happiness itself changes as the society develops, we cannot compare the two societies at different stages as if they were more or less efficient machines for obtaining an identical product.

16. The importance of the distinction is illustrated in almost every important social discussion. We notice certain bad results from a particular economical or social arrangement. The indissolubility of marriage inflicts hardship upon many individuals; let it be dissoluble in those cases. The importation of foreign products ruins certain manufacturers; let it be prohibited. We remedy the immediate evil by suppressing more obvious symptoms; but we often forget that we are dealing with a complex organism, and that the real problem involves innumerable and far-reaching actions and motives due to its constitution. We may be remedying the grievances of individual husbands and wives by lowering the general sanctity of family relations, and helping a particular class at the expense of the general efficiency of the nation. I need not say how constantly such omissions vitiate plausible arguments and involve the failure of the chimerical hopes of reformers. A similar practical conclusion may be drawn from this part of the argument: namely, that to prove that a rule of conduct involves pain in many cases is not a sufficient reason for abolishing it, though it is a presumption for modifying it. We are also bound to show that all the consequences involved in the change, including the changes in the individual character and in the social structure, will produce a more efficient social organism. It is true that, as a rule, we have to work out such changes by actual experiment; but it is well to note beforehand the need of conforming our expectations to the complexity of the problem.

### III. *Variability of Morality*

17. The evolution theory necessarily assumes a variation of morality, but not an indefinite or arbitrary variability. And this may lead us to a further question. We must admit, of course, that the calculus of happiness will give different results at different periods. Qualities will be regarded as virtuous amongst savages which cease to be virtuous amongst civilised men. Revenge is sometimes regarded as a duty, and in a rude social state we may say that it may conceivably cause more happiness than misery. As, according to Bacon, revenge is a kind of wild justice, it may to a certain extent discharge the functions of justice before a settled system of law has been developed. To weaken the motive without corresponding development of the virtues of order, would be to remove a penalty upon wrongdoing, and might imply rather a deficiency in energy of feeling than a defect of sympathy. Of two societies at the corresponding stage of development, the one which had it least might be in a morbid condition, and therefore in one less favourable to the average happiness than the other in which the sentiment was vigorous. This inconclusiveness of the utilitarian standard if no reference be made to the social state follows from the previous argument, and it presents another difficulty which frequently occurs. The variability of different estimates of happiness is pointed out as one of the main difficulties of the utilitarian creed. One man prefers sensual, another intellectual pleasures. Which is right, and why? The question is one of importance in regard to the sanction of morality—that is, in assigning the general motive to which moralists may appeal—and I shall return to it in the next chapter. Meanwhile let us ask how far it affects the criterion of morality. If the moral criterion resulted from taking an average of different estimates of happiness, there would be, doubtless, a difficulty. But then I deny that this gives in any case a true theory of morality. The moral sense is, indeed, according to me, a product of the social factor. It is the sum of certain instincts which have come to be imperfectly organised in the race, and which are

vigorous in proportion as the society is healthy and vigorous. Undoubtedly, again, they fall in with the general belief as to the effects upon happiness of certain modes of conduct. This, again, is equally true whether we suppose that the society has thriven because it had useful instincts—that is, because its judgments of happiness were in fact such as to make it thrive—or whether we suppose that the instinct has been consequent upon an observation of certain bad consequences. In the earlier stages of development the first method will presumably be the dominant, and in later stages the second, which implies a certain power of distinct reasoning. But in any case, there can be no doubt that the judgment that conduct is immoral will coincide with the judgment that it diminishes happiness; and therefore a race which has low conceptions of happiness will have a low view of morality. If the sensual pleasures play a great part in the general estimate of happiness, it is probable that the virtue of temperance will not be highly estimated.

18. This, I imagine, can hardly be disputed; but, on the other hand, it is not true that the moral judgment prevalent in a race amounts implicitly or explicitly to the assertion that the average standard of happiness is that which a moral agent will desire, or which it is desirable to secure for society at large. In fact, as I have argued, the general process in any progressive state of society implies something materially different. The moral law first appears, as I have said, in the external form. People come to recognise, that is, that certain lines of conduct do harm irrespectively of the motives of the agent. They observe, more or less clearly, that certain breaches of the law of temperance produce injuries to men in various relations; that the attempt to enforce particular beliefs causes war, misery, endless discord, and the suppression of intellectual activity. When this opinion has been established we have what may be called a purely utilitarian law of morals. There is a general conviction that a certain class of conduct causes suffering, but it is not yet clearly realised that such conduct is in itself wicked. It may be adopted by good men or from good motives—if goodness is measured by conformity to the

existing standard. But if society improves, the external law must become an internal law; the conduct which produces the bad effects must be intrinsically repugnant, and there is therefore a demand for the true virtues of temperance and toleration, with all the necessary implications as to the whole character. The purely utilitarian rule proposes a problem which is solved by generating a type of character so constituted that the evils perceived are intrinsically hateful to it.

19. It is, in fact, plain that the moral judgment does not correspond exactly to the individual estimate of happiness. A man, for example, may be sensual: when a gross pleasure is within his grasp, he may prefer it to a refined pleasure; but in his judgment of his neighbours he sees that the sensual person incurs diseases and inflicts injuries upon his neighbour. Even the most sensual of mankind wishes his daughters to grow up chaste, and would try to prevent his sons from becoming drunkards. A man may be intolerant in the sense of desiring to impose his own opinions by downright force, or by other modes than pure reason, but he may recognise the fact that the general admission of this principle leads to innumerable evils. It is a common observation that persecution has been attacked by men who had a full share of the persecuting spirit. They objected to being persecuted themselves, not to persecution in general; but in order to secure themselves they were forced to appeal to principles common to all, and therefore to insist upon the bad consequences of persecution in general, and to become, in spite of themselves, advocates of the genuine virtue of toleration. This process is the typical one. In attacking particular evils we become sensible to the general underlying principle, and by pointing out the mischievous results of certain kinds of conduct we are virtually preparing a higher type of character, to which not only that kind of conduct is repugnant, but all such conduct as springs from similar qualities of character. We object to the sensual conduct, not primarily as sensual, but as mischievous in some other way; we come to object to the sensuality itself when we recognise it as the source of these and of other evils. The process is possible because at every instant we start from an

approximate solution of the problem, and with instincts so far balanced and correlated as to be consistent with the conditions of existence: the process is slow because the redress of any evil involves a readjustment of the whole character; and it is endless, because from each point we have reached we develop new faculties, and have to attack new and wider problems. The whole process corresponds, not to the summary solution of a problem from fixed data, but to an incessant series of approximations, in which we start from one organisation which works tolerably to another which will on the whole work better.

20. In this sense it is true, as I should say, that the actual character of men, and therefore their estimate of happiness, must always provide the basis for every further improvement. The new rule of morality can only be introduced by making them sensible to evils appreciable at the lower stage. But at any given point of the process the moral law implicitly commands conduct for the realisation of which an improvement of the whole order, and therefore an elevation of the moral sense itself, is commanded. The lower natures can only be reached by motives suitable to their application; but in commanding conduct upon the lower ground the moralist is already favouring the introduction of the higher motive, and the actual moral sense is thus, in a progressive society, always in advance of the actual standard of the average individual. He can see, even from his own point of view, the advantages of a better morality, though it has not yet become a principle of his own character.

21. The general condemnation of utilitarian morality as degrading springs partly from another cause. I mean that the utilitarian is naturally the man who is beyond all things anxious to have his feet on solid earth, and to assign definite and tangible grounds for every conclusion. He is a realist as opposed to an idealist, prosaic rather than poetical, or belongs to the school which has more affinity for the materialist than the idealist conclusions. This is, of course, undeniable, and utilitarian codes of morality are spun of coarser if more enduring materials than those of the antagonistic systems.

But this follows from the temperament rather than from the principles of the moralist. The same disposition which makes him a utilitarian leads him to assign comparatively little importance to the kinds of happiness which imply a poetic imagination or a delight in the ideal world. But though he is liable to this error, it is an error upon his own principles. In whatever degree the poetic faculties give real pleasure, he must admit that pleasure into his calculus ; in whatever degree they are really conducive to the elevation or development of the race, he must admit that they are as 'useful' as the humbler instincts. The facts must decide, and there is no *a priori* reason for assuming that they will give a humiliating decision, though it is easy enough to see why the intellectual temperament, favourable, as speculation has hitherto been conducted, to the less idealist view, should also incline a man to put what we may simply call a lower interpretation upon the facts. But this is parenthetical.

## IV. *Extrinsic Morality*

22. The argument thus brings us to another set of criticisms upon utilitarian theories. The utilitarian takes what I have called the external view of morality; he judges from consequences exclusively, and says that conduct is good or bad as it produces a balance of happiness or misery, and this irrespectively of the motives of the agent. The motive, therefore, to moral conduct is always extrinsic. It is not in itself bad, but bad as producing some other effect. This doctrine takes various shapes with different utilitarian moralists, and if it were my purpose to criticise their doctrine exhaustively, I should have to consider precisely the meaning of some of the terms employed—as, for example, of the distinction between an act and its consequences—for the meaning seems to fluctuate considerably. I have, however, virtually given my answer in defending my own view, and I will therefore be content with indicating the general nature of the divergence. I have said, in the first place, that a law becomes truly moral when it can be stated in the internal

form. Morality is the conduct of the truly moral man, and immorality the conduct which is intrinsically repugnant to him. But here is the ambiguity which I have already tried to explain. The utilitarian asserts that there is no such thing as a love of virtue 'for its own sake.' In one sense of the words I entirely agree with him; in another, I should say that there is no real virtue at all unless it imply a love of virtue for its own sake. I agree with the utilitarian in so far as I deny that conscience is a separate faculty, instead of a mode of reaction of the whole character. If, therefore, there is any class of conduct which has no relation whatever to happiness of any other kind, which does not gratify or repel other instincts than the conscience, it can have no interest for the conscience either. Virtuous actions are not a separate class of actions, and actions which have no effect upon happiness are for that reason morally indifferent. On the other hand, it is equally true that a man is virtuous only if the bare fact that an action is right is to him a motive for acting in that way, and he is virtuous in proportion as it is always a sufficient motive. This, again, is possible because the virtuous man means simply the man who corresponds to the best social type, and will therefore act on all occasions in conformity with the character so defined. It is not because all virtuous actions have one definite end, which end is itself something different from virtue, but because all virtuous action implies action in conformity with certain instincts which have become organic in the virtuous man. To say, then, to such a man, 'This is right,' is the same thing as to say, 'This satisfies your instincts'; or, in other words, it states a sufficient inducement to the corresponding action.

23. The utilitarian statement represents this by defining moral conduct as that which has for its end the production of happiness, irrespectively of its quality. To love virtue for its own sake would be to love the means irrespectively of the end, which would be clearly irrational, though not impossible. But upon the view of the egoistic utilitarian, it seems that all truly virtuous conduct must be placed in this predicament. He explains the origin of the benevolent impulses through

association in such a way as to destroy their reality. The typical example is that of the miser, who, from loving money as a means for promoting pleasure, comes to love it as an end, and even when possession implies a sacrifice of pleasure. Similarly, it is suggested, we associate pleasant sensations with certain persons, and we love them as the cause of those sensations. If, however, love thus explained should prompt us to act in such a way as to sacrifice our pleasure for the good of others, we should be unreasonable in the same sense as the miser. We should be applying a rule in a case where it was plainly inapplicable, and using means for an end in a case where we knew that they would not produce that end. Association in this sense implies illusion; and the more reasonable we become, the more we should deliver ourselves from the bondage of such errors.

24. This view seems to include an imperfect statement of one side of the truth. I cannot admit its accuracy, indeed, even in regard to our old friend the miser. As a rule, it seems to me, the man who really desires money as a means to enjoyment is more likely to become a spendthrift than a miser. He will be so eager for present enjoyment as to neglect provision for future enjoyment. The miser, as I should say, is in the normal case a man who desires money in order to guard against the misery of poverty and dependence. His motive is not the positive desire for pleasure, but its negative side, the dread of actual suffering. When his desire for money becomes excessive, he is still guarding against the same evil, though he is taking exaggerated precautions. He resembles a man who is afraid of falling over a cliff, and who therefore will not go within a hundred yards, though in fact he would be equally safe within a yard of the edge. He reasons badly, therefore, in so far as his terrors are extravagant. But the motive is not necessarily changed in character. There is always a danger of loss and poverty, though the danger may be so small that a wise man would not consider it. The motives of the miser may be changed in other directions. He loses all relish for pleasures which he has never allowed himself to enjoy, and many tastes have

thus been stifled in the germ. And, on the other side, the various activities necessary for the acquisition and preservation of money have become pleasant to him, as any mode of activity which gives room for skill, forethought, and a discharge of energy may be really pleasant. There is, for example, a pleasure in skilful speculation, as there is a pleasure in the game of chess, abstractedly from any consideration whatever of an 'end.' It is only when we assume that all activity is conditioned by the prospect of the pleasure attainable at the end that we are forced into the supposition of a confusion between means and ends. Every kind of activity has its own pleasure, as affording a means for the discharge of energy or escape from ennui. The miser who finds pleasure in the act of money-making need not be unreasonable even if he proposes to make no use of the money. The money-making is in itself pleasant, and pleasant because it is a regulated mode of activity which gives occupation to a variety of faculties.

25. Now if we compare this case with that of benevolent action, we may see what is really implied. It is doubtless true that we may learn to love our neighbours because they have contributed to our pleasures. The child, in whom sympathy and intelligence are still dormant, may thus regard its mother as the source of agreeable sensations. More generally, as I have argued, moral progress may proceed in an analogous way. We may become interested in the welfare of our neighbours because our interests are identical; and this observation may convince us that the identity extends to cases in which the direct sympathy would not dictate benevolent action. When this community of action has once been established in any degree, there is room for the play of sympathy. The happiness of others, so soon as we can appreciate it, becomes an end in itself; but this sympathy is enabled to expand because, previously to its existence, the rule of conduct which it prescribes has already been adopted from different motives. The external rule then passes into the internal, and genuine and intrinsic moral motives become possible. Hence the association theory has a certain truth

within its province, but it does not by any means account for the whole phenomenon, and it fails just at the point where true morality begins: it may explain, that is, why we first take a pleasure in the welfare of others; it may in some cases even explain why, though still selfish, we act unselfishly, and so far, in this case, unreasonably. It is possible, too, that, as in the case of avarice, the various kinds of activity called forth by conduct which does good to others become in themselves pleasant. A man, for example, may learn to take pleasure in surgical operations, though without any genuine sympathy for his patients; he may even be externally unselfish to the point of heroism, and sacrifice his life to his pursuit, as another man might sacrifice his in the pursuit of some purely selfish and even degrading pleasure. The conditions of life, which force every member of a society to conform in some degree to the interests of others, and which therefore involve a considerable conformity between the egoistic and altruistic sentiments, may for that reason generate a kind of fictitious benevolence, a pleasure in conduct which has in fact good results to others, even though the contemplation of those results affords no pleasure. Upon this view, however, sympathy is so far unreasonable. Directly it prompts to self-sacrifice we are the slaves of sophistry or a misleading association. Upon my theory, on the contrary, sympathy is a real motive implied in all true morality, though it can only operate as some germ of reason becomes developed, and begins to operate within the line already laid down by the non-sympathetic customs.

## V. *Expediency*

26. The utilitarian, therefore, who is also an egoist, does, as I hold, deprive morality of its essential meaning, and the assumption that the principle of association explains all modes of thought and feeling lends itself to that mode of regarding the facts. The utilitarian, however, is more naturally a genuine believer in altruism; that belief falls in with the theory that the criterion of morality is the tendency of con-

duct to promote happiness, for this tendency then corresponds to a genuine motive. We have, however, still to inquire whether the morality thus constructed has sufficient stability, or whether it may not be rightly condemned as encouraging mere 'expediency.' This is perhaps the most frequent line of attack upon utilitarian systems. The force, indeed, of the criticism depends to a great extent upon the assumption that expediency is another name for selfishness. When a man breaks a particular moral rule—that of truthfulness, for example—because he thinks that a lie will do more good than harm, we accuse him of acting upon principles of expediency. But there is certainly a wide moral difference between the cases in which the lie is prompted simply by the consideration that a lie will be useful to the agent, or that in which it is prompted by the genuine belief that it will increase the general happiness. We are apt to confound the two cases, and to saddle the man who breaks the rule upon any consideration with all the blame due to the selfish consideration. The inference may be frequently correct in fact; expediency may, in point of fact, be generally used as a cloak for selfishness; or, which is probably nearer the truth, a man who allows himself to break rules for the good of others may be strongly tempted to break them for his own private good at the expense of others. Still a man who should really act upon the altruistic version of the utilitarian criterion might be shifty and unreliable in his conduct, but could not properly be called selfish. His conduct would generally be moral, though he might diverge in certain cases from the moral law.

27. What, then, is implied by the supremacy of the moral law, or autonomy of the conscience? If there is any rule of conduct which can be laid down as absolute, it must at once decide the morality of the conduct affected in every conceivable case. If we admit of any criterion outside of morality, it must limit the sway of the moral law. If the true test be the utilitarian, then we must either admit that lying, for example, is right when it increases happiness, or we must prove that lying never increases happiness. The utili-

tarian admits that any such proof is impossible. There may be cases in which a lie will do more good than harm; therefore 'Lie not' cannot be an absolute law. He says, indeed, that we are forced to act for the most part upon probabilities, and that experience shows probability to be enormously in favour of truth-telling. But the question occurs, Why should we act upon this general probability without reference to the particular circumstances? The general rule is not properly 'supreme' over the particular, and it is hard to see how it can be said to override it. Take any ordinary case of prudence. I know that, as a rule, it is imprudent, say, to trust money to a stranger. That is a sufficient guide for me if the only thing that I know about a man is the bare fact that he is a stranger. It holds, again, so long as I know nothing to take him out of the class as an exceptional person. But directly I do know something which takes him out of that class, I must, if I am reasonable, modify my judgment accordingly. The only rule that can be given is to act upon the whole probabilities of the case. This, of course, includes a reference to the general probability which arises from the fact that the man is a stranger, but it does not give any absolute predominance to the rule. I must take it into council, but not obey it as a master. My ground of action in any particular case must be my judgment of the probability, which will be guided partly by reference to the general rule that strangers are not to be trusted, but also by reference to any other rule which may tend to show that this particular stranger is trustworthy. I have then said everything when I have said, 'Act upon the probabilities,' for that of course includes a reference to every applicable principle of judgment. Why should I not say the same in moral questions? Should not the rule be, 'Act in that way which will probably produce the greatest happiness,' where the 'probably' of course includes a reference to general induction from similar cases already observed, but regards it only as an induction, not as an infallible test? And if this be so, how can the moral law be regarded as absolute and supreme? It is nothing but a useful collection of precedents tending to guide our judgment in particular cases.

28. This, it is felt, is a dangerous principle. The utilitarian, however, diminishes the importance of his attack upon the supremacy of the moral rule by obvious considerations; that is to say, he insists upon the extent of our ignorance as to the consequences, and upon the danger of trusting ourselves. The pleas must be admitted to have considerable force; but they seem to leave the difficulty to some undefined degree. For, in the first place, however great the importance of trusting to the general rule, it cannot be denied that we are able to make some estimate of the consequences, or otherwise we could not make the necessary induction; and thus, again, it must be admitted that, after making all allowance for our ignorance, the question is still essentially one of probabilities, and the presumption in favour of the beneficial consequences of certain particular lies may be enormous. And, in the next place, the danger of trusting ourselves is undoubtedly very great; and yet it is a danger from which we cannot shrink. The danger is, in fact, a danger of misinterpreting the precedents which we have set. The general rule must be, not that lies are immoral, but that mischievous lies are immoral. Why, then, should it be supposed that we should be more in danger of telling a mischievous lie because we have told a beneficial lie? If we do so, we are falling into an error of reasoning. We are holding fast to the accident and dropping the substance. Why should not the fact that we have acted for the best in one case determine us to act for the best in another, although in one case the best action accidentally involved a lie, and in the other accidentally involved truth-speaking? Generally, if the promotion of the general happiness is the sole criterion, why should not the desire for general happiness be the sole motive for moral conduct? If so, can we properly consider moral rules as anything more than formulæ, useful in calculating the probable consequence of conduct to happiness, but always liable—like any other empirical formulæ—to be overridden by special circumstances?

29. I cannot, upon my own hypothesis, meet this by declaring the particular moral laws to be absolute and supreme

The attempt to do so only leads to casuistry of the objectionable kind. Make the rule against lying absolute, and you find yourself obliged to bring the particular cases under a different rule by some device analogous to a legal fiction, and more demoralising than an open declaration that the moral law is not to be always observed. Nor can I accept the statement in the form that the contingent consequences of an action must always be set aside. It seems to me that the known consequences of an action must always be relevant to its morality. If I were absolutely certain that a lie would do good, I should certainly hesitate before speaking the truth, and the certainty might be of such a kind as to make me think it a duty to lie. It has been said by moralists that a good man would not commit the most venial sin, even though the consequences of his virtuous action were the perishing of all mankind in torture. The statement is either shocking or meaningless. I can conceive of no action which would not become an abominable crime by the simple fact of its entailing such consequences, and of no crime which would not become an imperative duty if it evaded them. A man who saved his dirty soul at such a price would deserve damnation ten times over; and if he did not get it, I should not regard his deity as a truly moral agent. If, on the other hand, the act still remained virtuous, it could only be because we assume, for some good reason or other, that the moral action has other good consequences—say the eternal happiness of the agent—which overbalance the evil consequences. In that case the utilitarian position is not really denied.

30. The assertion that the particular moral rules are not absolute is a repetition of a principle already laid down. It is impossible to secure more than an approximate coincidence between the external and the internal law. However closely they may, and frequently do, coincide, it is always (or almost always) possible to suggest cases in which they diverge. Wherever such a deviation occurs, the true moral rule must be the internal rule. Morality is essentially a determination of character, and hence wherever adherence to a fixed rule



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implies a change of character, or, inversely, the persistency of character implies a breach of the rule, the virtuous man will break the rule. Hence, again, the attempt to secure an absolute and immutable moral law in its external shape must be illusory. The moral law can be stated unconditionally when it is stated in the form 'Be this,' but not when stated in the form 'Do this.' We may say without any qualification whatever that the good man must be merciful, just, truthful, temperate, courageous, and so forth; but for the very reason that the law is in this sense absolute, it cannot be absolute as prescribing external modes of conduct. Hence, again, whatever the difficulty of deciding in particular cases what is the right sense of conduct, we have a definite principle, and therefore a fixed rule, though not always an easily discoverable rule. The truly virtuous man is the typical man whose character conforms to the conditions of social vitality. The question what is right is in all cases equivalent to the question what the right-minded man would do, supposing him of course to be fully informed, and to reason correctly from the facts. In nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand he will act in conformity with the ordinary moral rule, say, of speaking the truth. We may say absolutely that the moral man must be thoroughly trustworthy. Wherever trustworthiness implies truth-telling, he will tell the truth; but if, in any particular case, the same character implies lying, he will lie, and will lie like a man, that is, without trying to conceal from himself by any shuffle of casuistry the true nature of his conduct. In this sense morality includes an element of expediency, not, that is, in the sense of denying that there is a rule of conduct in this case as in all others, but in the sense that the rule may fail in certain cases definable in principle, but not precisely ascertainable by any definite external indications. Normally, any deflection from the rule implies a deficiency in some good quality. In certain very rare cases it implies the presence of good qualities. In the latter case the conduct is right, as in the former it is wrong.

31. To apply this more specifically to the problems which

actually present themselves would be to write a treatise upon casuistry; but one or two remarks may clear the general principle. It must be observed, in the first place, that many so-called problems of casuistry are not properly moral problems at all. In many cases we must admit that the morality of a given course of conduct depends upon its tendency to produce happiness. *Ceteris paribus*, I must do that which will give most pleasure to others. But, again, to decide what will give most pleasure to others is often a very difficult question, which admits of being decided only by tact or instinct. We must judge in most practical cases of any difficulty by probability, or, in other words, by guessing. When we really believe that we shall do most good by a certain course of conduct, that conduct is so far right; and here the moral rule is plain, however difficult the application. Again, many casuistical problems turn upon such questions as the nature of some implied contract. It is a question of law what rights I have created by marrying, or accepting an office, or making some commercial bargain. Morality in such cases may simply order me to keep my contract, whatever it may be, and the 'whatever' is to be decided by the lawyers. And this, again, leads to another distinction often, as I have said, overlooked. The problem is frequently stated ambiguously, and may either be, 'Does the actually existing standard of morality forbid a certain action?' or may be, 'Is it desirable that the action should be forbidden by morality?' The moralist, like the lawyer, is apt to conceal the fact that he is really making new laws under the pretext of enlarging the old. In reality, he is trying to frame a more precise rule than the one which has hitherto been accepted. It would be better frankly to admit the clear nature of the case, because it would then be easier to argue upon the principles to be applied. Upon my theory, the method is defined by the doctrine already laid down. A certain kind of conduct, we suppose, has hitherto been regarded as indifferent. There is no established rule for assuming whether a good man would or would not act in that way. To decide, then, whether the conduct is right or wrong is virtually to add a new moral precept; and that is implicitly to inquire

whether the adoption of the new principle would, on the utilitarian showing, do more good or harm; or, more accurately, according to me, to ask whether the incorporation of this rule in the moral system would imply a closer approximation to the solution of the great problem of social utility. Of course, the question of the affinity of this proposed rule to previously accepted principles will throw light upon the whole problem; but we need not conceal the fact that we are really trying to extend and amend these principles, and not simply judging new cases by the old principle. Here, therefore, the ultimate difficulty is still a question of fact—whether, namely, social development implies the adoption of the new rule suggested?

32. We may now come to the proper casuistical questions where there is a real difficulty in interpreting the law. If it is ever right to tell a lie, when is it right? What are the principles by which we must judge? The utilitarian principle seems to suggest the answer, Whenever the probabilities are in favour of a lie doing more good than harm. The morality of this answer depends partly upon the question, What are the 'consequences' to be admitted as relevant? May I take into account in my calculation the pain which the bare telling of a lie gives to a man accustomed to speak the truth? Or shall we say that as this pain depends upon a fallacy of association, we ought to accustom ourselves to lie, and so to find lying painless, whenever we see a balance of good consequences in its favour? There can be no doubt that such a principle strikes most people as immoral. The actual standard of morality, whatever its justification, condemns lying in almost all cases, and only admits of doubtful exceptions where the balance is seen to be overpoweringly in favour of a lie, such as the famous case of giving information to a murderer. It seems, then, that in this case the average moral judgment does not conform precisely to the utilitarian standard. It condemns useful lies, though we may admit that there is a distinction between the cases of a lie which is useful to the agent and that which is useful to the world at large. The former kind of lie would, of course,

be condemned by the utilitarians, in cases at least where the good to the agent is counterbalanced by evil to others; whilst in regard to the latter, the moral standard would seem to be rather unsettled, and people are generally inclined to evade a solution by denying that the case ever occurs, or by saying that it occurs so rarely as not to be worth consideration. There is a strong feeling that it is dangerous to consider such facts closely, as an admission of a possibility of exceptions tends to increase the freedom of making exceptions.

33. Now I certainly think that the utilitarian principle does not explain the whole case. The moral rule is formed in a great degree, as I have argued, by a utilitarian method; that is, by observing the bad and good consequences of certain kinds of conduct. But morality includes more than this, as the moral sense is the product of the whole social development, and therefore of the development of social instincts by other processes than that of direct calculation. The whole system of instincts must be such as are implied in a healthful social growth, but the sentiment may justify itself by being actually useful instead of being generated from a perception of utility. Hence, as I think, the true analogy must be found elsewhere. A kind of moral sentiment, as I have said, grows up in every social organisation. The patriotic spirit of a citizen or the military spirit of the soldier is closely related to the moral sentiments which discharge a similar function in the 'social tissue.' Let us take, for example, the striking case of the soldier's devotion to his regiment or army. The essential conditions of military excellence is the spirit of subordination. The ideal soldier—the man who realises most fully the conditions of military life—is one who obeys orders implicitly. The code of military duty includes, therefore, as its first principle, the great rule, 'Do as you are bid.' In almost every case, disobedience to orders proceeds from laziness, cowardice, want of patriotic spirit, or some quality which so far makes a man a worse soldier. And hence, again, the rule is put forth absolutely; and no commander would endeavour to impress upon the mind of a subordinate the importance of sometimes

disobeying orders. And yet it is plain that questions may arise in this capacity which are precisely analogous to the ordinary problems of casuistry. No one will deny that the importance of implicit obedience is founded upon the directly utilitarian consideration that obedient soldiers make a better army; but cases occur in which the implicit obedience produces a bad effect. When, for example, the Roman soldier stood at his post at Pompeii to be overwhelmed by the eruption, his heroic devotion was so far a source of weakness to the army. Had he been less devoted, the army would have had one brave soldier (though not quite so brave a soldier) the more. Or if we call him stupid, we must then admit that superior intelligence would lead him in this instance to break a law unconditionally laid down. Take, again, the opposite case. Nelson won several victories by direct insubordination, and is therefore a rather awkward precedent for the people who like to tell us that to learn to command we should first learn to obey. Nelson clearly failed in his duty, and had he failed in his venture would probably have been punished. Was he right or wrong? If wrong, it is plain that he would in fact have been a less efficient commander for having a stronger sense of duty; and if right, we must admit that a man may be right sometimes to take the law into his own hands. The most reasonable view is probably that Nelson, being really a man of genius and conscious of his genius, was justified in acting as he did. He was 'justified,' that is, in this sense, that his action proved him to be a more efficient commander on the whole, although his case cannot be made into a precedent, because we cannot say what constitutes a man of genius or suggest any satisfactory test of the presence of genius.

34. Such cases may of course be multiplied indefinitely, and they pass imperceptibly into moral problems. The principle upon which they rest is apparently simple. It is essential, that is, to the welfare of the army, that a certain spirit of discipline should be generated. The stronger it is, within certain limits, the more efficient is the army. An army usually composed of such men as the Pompeian sentinel

would be invincible by any ordinary foe. In certain special cases the sentiment thus stimulated produces the very result against which it is a safeguard in the normal case. A good soldier sticks to his post or his colours when the post is useless and the colours represent nothing but so much rag. Still, as a rule, the danger is entirely on the other side, and we strengthen the motives to obedience as much as possible, leaving it to the occasional man of genius to break rules on his own responsibility. We tacitly admit that a breach of rules may be right in certain very rare cases, but they are cases which it is impossible to define by any sufficient criterion. They must spring from zeal, not from the absence of zeal, but they are only justifiable by self-conscious genius, which unfortunately has a strong outward resemblance to self-deceiving folly. Finally, if we can reckon upon more intelligence in the man, we may allow a greater latitude. We recognise the danger of making the soldier too much of a machine, and we try to allow for a greater latitude of individual action. This, indeed, does not alter the general principle of obedience, but only makes the particular rules less precise; still, as stimulating the tendency of independent judgment, it probably lowers the absolute character of the disciplinary rules; the obedience is no longer blind, but includes a more or less explicit reference to the end for which it was imposed.

35. It seems to me that the same principle really governs the moral case. The absoluteness of the moral law does in fact rest upon the principle alleged by the utilitarian: namely, that men cannot be trusted, and should not trust themselves. They could trust themselves, perhaps, if they always reasoned rightly; but then people do not reason rightly, and still less, if we may use the phrase, do our emotions reason rightly. The fact may be regretted, but it is a fact which it is idle to neglect in morality, which is meant to bind men as they are, not for men of some ideal but hitherto unapproachable state. The utilitarian principle of acting in every case from a judgment of the probable consequences might answer at a time when we could also allow every soldier in our army to act

upon his own judgment as to running away and fighting, because we could trust each man to see when the good of the army required him to run, and to run only when required by the good of the army. Till that time arrives we cannot grant a liberty which is liable to abuse. There are moral precepts which clearly await such a process. Why, for example, do we not allow life to be taken when life means continued agony? We cannot allow it because we cannot trust the persons who would have to apply it. The physician makes it an absolute rule to preserve life as much as he can, because, if he once admitted any other consideration, he would open the door to innumerable abuses. That is a plain, and, as I think, an amply sufficient reason for maintaining the rule, and so far deviating from the utilitarian method, which would prescribe calculation of the probabilities for each particular case. We cannot, in fact, keep up the value of human life without fostering what is in some sense a superstitious regard for life—a tenderness for life when the desirability of life has disappeared, and so far a kind of conduct which may be called unreasonable. I do not inquire whether, as a matter of fact, this sentiment is not encouraged to excess at the present day; but the justification depends upon this principle, and, so far as I can see, upon this principle alone, unless we resort to arbitrary hypotheses to cover an unreasoned prejudice.

36. If, now, we suppose that a man, knowing that life meant for him nothing but agony, and that moreover his life could not serve others, and was only giving useless pain to his attendants, and perhaps involved the sacrifice of health to his wife and children, should commit suicide, what ought we to think of him? He would, no doubt, be breaking the accepted moral code; but why should he not break it? Because he is setting a bad example? Undoubtedly that must be allowed to have some weight. If his conduct tended to depress the general estimate of the value of life below the point which is necessary to social welfare, he is so far setting a bad precedent—bad, that is, in so far as it is likely to be abused. In conforming to the law he is making himself a

martyr to the general welfare, and deserves the praise of unselfishness. But if, again, he knew that his conduct could not have this effect, as in a case where he might be quite certain that his action would remain unknown, what harm would he be doing? May we not say that he is acting on a superior moral principle, and that because he is clearly diminishing the sum of human misery? It is impossible to settle the case in concrete instances, because there is no fixed external test. The conduct may spring either from cowardice or from a loftier motive than the ordinary, and the merit of the action is therefore not determinable; but, assuming the loftier motive, I can see no ground for disapproving the action which flows from it.

37. Briefly, then, if conduct be such as to increase the actual sum of happiness, if it does not imply a defect of altruism in the agent, and if it be such as not to set a bad precedent either to ourselves or to others, I do not see in what sense it is morally blameworthy. To adhere to the rule, when the rule clearly does not apply, is not to be moral, but to be a moral pedant. The truth is simply that the race must form its moral code in the same way as we have to stimulate the sense of discipline in an army; that is, we have to deal with human beings who cannot be trusted; we have to encourage modes of feeling which, though generally of the highest value, do not point infallibly to that kind of conduct which is the most productive of happiness; we have to take human nature in the rough, and to give external rules which do not formally and at all points correspond to the judgment which would be passed by the most intelligent and sensitive of the species. So far as the utilitarian mode of reasoning tends to obscure this essential fact, it may be rightly condemned because liable to abuse; but it is possible to interpret the utilitarian principle differently, and I regard it as in any case an approximation to the truth, though tending perhaps to a certain laxity in practice, in so far as it assumes an impracticable nicety in the application of the criterion.

38. In what sense, however, can the theory here stated be properly stigmatised as a doctrine of expediency? To act

rightly, I say, is to act as the truly moral man would act; the truly moral man being defined by his fulfilment of the conditions of social welfare. He has, therefore, certain qualities which may be called absolutely good; that is, that they are good on the sole assumption of a certain social and individual organisation. They imply, again, obedience to the established moral standard in almost every case. The thoroughly trustworthy man will speak the truth all but invariably. But in certain rare cases, the internal and external laws cease to coincide absolutely. Now in such cases the ideal or thoroughly moral man will break the external law, and break it in obedience to his instinct. He must trust his instincts, for he has nothing else to which he can trust. If in fact, the exceptions to the law admitted of being definitely formulated, we should have the case of a new moral law. The rule would no longer be, 'Speak the truth,' but 'Speak the truth under such and such circumstances.' We might then have some difficult questions as to the rightness of obeying the recognised law, or obeying the law which is still struggling for recognition. On our hypothesis, the difficulty is that the problem has to be solved without any fixed test to go by. Still the difficulty is essentially the same. The man has to act upon his instinctive perception that in this case the moral law is defective. But to say that he must trust his instinct is not to say that whatever his instinct tells him will be right. It is simply that in certain cases the defined and well-informed instinct outruns the definite and assignable formula. He is the final court of appeal, but not, therefore, above the law. The ear of the musician may judge of discords and harmonies too fine to be measured by mathematical instruments. He will accept the general rules, but will apply them with greater severity than any mechanical contrivance can sufficiently test. In the same way, the man of fine moral taste has to solve problems too delicate for the coarser rules which serve for everyday life; not because he despises those rules, but because he has a keener sense of their true value. In some of the noblest actions recorded the man has, in doing them, broken with the

accepted code of steadygoing respectable moralists; but the rightness or wrongness of his conduct is still amenable to a test, which, though only implicit, is as valid and fixed as any other. The exception to the law must always itself imply a law. It must embody some general principle, though the principle cannot be absolutely laid down in particular cases; for the general principle, briefly stated, must be this, namely, that the conduct in question would be commanded by a higher code of morality, and by 'higher' I mean such a code as would be obtained by a general increase of social efficiency, and a closer approximation to an adequate solution of the great problem of life. The problem, therefore, just noted must always occur: namely, whether I ought to act upon a code which is not yet recognised by the accepted morality, and which cannot be recognised on account of human stupidity and insensibility. That question, again, can only be answered by taking into account the total effect, and asking whether I am doing more good by my action or more harm by setting a precedent capable of misinterpretation.

39. There is, then, only one test for such problems. Does a given deviation from the law imply an advance or a decline in the stage of moral development? Does it mean that the qualities which imply conformity to the moral law have not been sufficiently organised in the individual, or that they have become a part of his nature so thoroughly that a still finer instinct has been generated which transcends him? That is a question of fact, which it is generally pretty easy to answer. Most conduct which offends the average standard proceeds from some vicious motive. But we cannot deny that there are examples to the contrary; and we must admit this freely in spite of any taunts as to expediency, which really confound the two cases or overlook the undoubted importance of the great fact upon which the importance of every kind of general rule of conduct really rests: namely, that men are in fact too stupid, too wilful, and too skilful in self-deception to be trusted to act from more refined considerations.

40. The answer suggests one other difficulty. Let us grant that the moral man will sometimes break a law which it is vitally important to impress upon the ordinary man. Is not this to make two rules, one for the good and one for the bad? Rather it is to assert that the ordinary man cannot perform the same action as the good. If the same externally, it is not really the same because it does not imply the same motive. But to make a general rule of conduct is to make a law which can be brought to bear upon everybody. A moral law, as here stated, seems to be simply a description of the way in which certain people will act, and therefore to have no meaning for others. This introduces, therefore, the problem which we now have to consider. What is the relation between morality and happiness? What, in the utilitarian language, is the general sanction of morality? A man may say, 'That is doubtless "right," or, in other words, it is what a virtuous man would do; but I happen not to be a virtuous man; why should I do it?' How are we to answer him

# CHAPTER X

## MORALITY AND HAPPINESS

### I. *The Sanction*

1. I HAVE thus considered the problem, What is the criterion which, upon the evolutionist theory, must be substituted for the greatest-happiness criterion of the utilitarian? And this leads naturally to the problem how, upon the same theory, must the utilitarian sanction be modified? Why should a man be virtuous? The answer depends upon the answer to the previous question, What is it to be virtuous? If, for example, virtue means all such conduct as promotes happiness, the motives to virtuous conduct must be all such motives as impel a man to aim at increasing the sum of happiness. These motives constitute the sanction, and the sanction may be defined either as an intrinsic or an extrinsic sanction; it may, that is, be argued either that virtuous conduct invariably leads to consequences which are desirable to every man, whether he be or be not virtuous; or, on the other hand, that virtuous conduct as such, as irrespectively of any future consequences, makes the agent happier. Some moralists say that a good man will go to heaven and a bad man to hell. Others, that virtue is itself heaven and vice hell. Now, I have already said that an answer which assigns a really extrinsic motive is, to my mind, a virtual evasion of the question. Yet the line between extrinsic and intrinsic motives is perhaps not clearly drawn, and there are difficulties in the assignment of a purely intrinsic motive which require explicit consideration. The criterion which I have accepted is, briefly, that a man is virtuous or the reverse so far as he does or does not conform to the type defined by the

healthy condition of the social organism. We have, therefore, to consider what advantages are implied in the possession or the acquirement of such a character, or the observance of the corresponding rules of action.

2. The problem is thus to find a scientific basis for the art of conduct. The 'sanction' must supply the motive power by which individuals are to be made virtuous. It is for the practical moralist the culminating point of all ethical theory. Now, according to my argument, the primary and direct incidence, if I may say so, of moral sanctions is upon the social organism, whilst the individual is only indirectly and secondarily affected. There is (as I hold) a necessary and immediate relation between social vitality and morality. We may say unconditionally that healthy development implies an efficient moral code, and that social degeneration implies the reverse. But it does not follow that there is the same intimate connection in the individual case. As, indeed, the society has no existence apart from the individual by which it is constituted, there must be a close connection; but it must be subject to various limitations, in so far as the conditions of health and happiness of any particular person are not exhaustively defined by those of the society to which he belongs. We cannot transfer to each member of the society what we can say of the society regarded as a whole. It is at least conceivable that the sacrifice of some of its members may be essential to the welfare of the society itself. The virtuous men may be the very salt of the earth, and yet the discharge of a function socially necessary may involve their own misery. A great moral and religious teacher has often been a martyr, and we are certainly not entitled to assume either that he was a fool for his pains, or, on the other hand, that the highest conceivable degree of virtue can make martyrdom agreeable.

3. Here, in short, we come to one of the multiform and profound problems which have tortured men in all ages. Virtue—no one denies it—does good to somebody, but how often to the agent? A belief in justice as regulating the universe has been held to imply (I do not ask whether

rightly held) that happiness should somehow go along with virtue. To give up the belief in such a supreme regulation seemed, again, to be an admission that virtue was folly. Yet how can this doctrine be reconciled to the plainest facts of experience? The lightning strikes the good and the bad; the hero dies in the ruin of his cause; the highest self-denial is repaid by the blackest ingratitude; the keenest sympathy with our fellows implies the greatest liability to suffering; the cold, the sensual, and the systematically selfish often seem to have the pleasantest lots in life. Great men in despair have pronounced virtue to be but a name; philosophers have evaded the difficulty by a verbal denial of the plainest truths; theologians have tried to console their disciples by constructing ideal worlds which have served for little more than a recognition of the unsatisfactory state of the actual world. The problem, so often attacked, will perhaps be solved when we know the origin of evil. Meanwhile, we have only to consider in what way it is related to ethical theories.

4. One preliminary remark may help to clear the way. Any sound proposition whatever about happiness must include some reference, tacit or explicit, to the constitution of the agent. Happiness, whatever else it may imply, implies a state of some conscious being; it must be conditioned by, or, in the mathematical phrase, be a function of, the organic state. We may, of course, discover conditions of happiness common to large classes of organised beings, or even to organised beings in general. Such a condition, for example, would be asserted in the proposition (true or false) that happiness implies a state of heightened vitality. Other more special conditions apply only to particular classes. The intellectual pleasures imply a certain degree of mental culture; the pleasure of music implies a certain specific sensibility. Such pleasures imply a faculty which is not common to all men, but to all intellectual or to all musical men. Unless, therefore, virtue and happiness are related as merely different modes of regarding the same quality, it is idle to attempt to assign their relations by a simple inspection of the concepts

themselves. Whatever relation they may have must be dependent upon the constitution of the agent. And though it might conceivably turn out that the relation was such as to be independent of any possible variations in the individual constitution, we cannot make any such assumption at starting. The presumption is in this, as in every other case, that the relation of happiness and virtue will be dependent upon the character of the agent. It may be true that the happiness of a given class depends upon virtue, and that class may be a very large one; but we have no right to assume that the class is identical with the whole human race; nor can any such theory be established without an investigation sufficient to rebut the natural presumption that some of the class qualities are necessary for its existence. In fact, the most obvious answer to the question, 'Does virtue coincide with happiness?' would probably be, 'Yes, for the virtuous man.' As music gives pleasure only to men who have a musical ear, so it may be virtue gives pleasure to men with a conscience. If the answer is not generally given, it is not because it is destitute of considerable plausibility, and, as I think, of a great degree of accuracy; but because it is calculated to shock many respectable people. But this is not a philosophical consideration.

5. The remark is enough to exhibit the fallacy of a familiar short cut to the desired conclusion. When attempting to estimate the happiness of the virtuous, we may, it has been said, confine ourselves to the judgment of the virtuous. The intellectual man alone can judge of the value of intellectual pleasures, whilst he can judge as well as the sensual of the value of sensual pleasures; he alone, therefore, can make a comparison; and as every one who can thus compare does in fact (so it is asserted) prefer the intellectual, we are justified in accepting this authoritative decision. The argument, like many other formally unsound arguments, has, I think, some force in a shape to be presently noticed; but in this shape it appears to be hopelessly untenable. For, in the first place, no judgment of pleasure proceeding by this method of direct inspection alone can have much authority. We are very bad

judges even of our own pleasures, and we have innumerable temptations to give a coloured judgment. We may, therefore, always appeal from a man's avowed sentiments to his practice; and it can hardly be said that men of the highest intellectual qualities always display a relative indifference to the pleasures of the senses. Solomon the preacher must be compared with Solomon the king. Nor does it follow that if I can judge of my own pleasures I can therefore judge of other men's pleasures. The fallacy inherent in all such inferences is one of the most familiar topics of experience. If I prefer Shakespeare to a mutton chop, I may say that I so far judge the pleasures of imagination to be preferable for me to those of the senses. But how can I leap from that proposition to the proposition that they are preferable for others? They are clearly not preferable for the pig, or to the Patagonian, or even to those civilised men who are in this matter of the pig's way of thinking. At most, I may infer that certain cultivated minds find more pleasure in poetry than in eating, but still it does not follow that the cultivated man finds more pleasure in poetry than the sensual man finds in eating. The two men are differently constituted throughout, and it may be that the intellectual man has lost in one kind of sensibility what he has gained in another. To assert positively that he gains on the whole is to make an assumption often disputed, and of which either side may be taken without self-contradiction—the assumption, namely, that an increased intellectual sensibility necessarily carries with it increased power of enjoyment on the whole; or, in other words, that it always answers to cultivate your brain at the expense of your stomach.

6. There is yet another decisive objection. It is not even true that any man absolutely prefers Shakespeare to a mutton chop. Rather, the phrase is nonsensical. Only an infant compares his love for his cousin with his love for jam-tart. Shakespeare himself would at the right moment have preferred a cup of sack to the sweetest music or the loftiest poetry. A starving saint might choose to eat a crust of bread rather than listen to the most edifying sermon. Briefly, a pleasure is not a separate thing, which has a certain constant

value, but a state of feeling which varies both according to the permanent constitution and the varying condition of that constitution. Each desire has a certain force, depending upon the circumstances and character of the agent, and there are conditions under which any particular desire may, for the moment at least, become predominant. We can only obtain absurd propositions when we attempt, in discussing pains and pleasures, to abstract from the agent who feels them. Nor can we evade the force of this argument by making a distinction between the quantity and quality of pleasure. It is doubtless possible to give some meaning to such phrases. We may, for example, distinguish between pleasures as they affect different sensibilities, and call those pleasures highest which require activity of the intellect or the sympathetic emotions, and those lower which excite only the senses. Or, again, it may be true that some pleasures are massive and others acute; that some imply a state of the whole organism, and others only the excitement of a particular organ. But though this and much more may be true, and for some purposes important, it does not affect our present argument; it does not enable us to say, that is, that one pleasure is absolutely preferable to another. Pleasures may indeed be compared in respect of pleasantness; that is, we may say that, under given conditions, the desire for one will overpower the desire for another. But each will be alternately strongest as the conditions vary, and therefore the formula which expresses their relations must always take those conditions into account, and can never yield the statement that one is always preferable to the other. This is equally true whether we mean by preferable that which is actually preferred, or that which ought to be preferred; for, upon any moral theory worth discussing, every natural desire has its turn not only of preference but of rightful preference.

7. I return, then, to the problem, which cannot be solved by any such summary method, What is the relation between virtue and happiness? and I have to admit that it may be a relation dependent upon the character of the agent. And here we have to notice at once that there is an apparent difficulty in our assumptions which necessitates a re-statement of

the question. Given the character, I have said, the conduct follows; the virtuous man acts virtuously and the vicious man viciously. If we suppose, then, that the character remains constant, there is apparently no sense in asking whether it would make the vicious man happier to act virtuously, for by acting virtuously he would become virtuous, and this, by the hypothesis, does not happen. So long, therefore, as we assume character to be fixed, the question resolves itself into this, whether the virtuous man is happier than the vicious man? Assuming the external circumstances to be the same for both, we have to ask how far virtue is under all or under what circumstances a guarantee for happiness? But, in the next place, the assumption of the fixity of character is of course arbitrary. A man's character is in all cases the product of all the influences to which he has been subjected from his infancy acting upon his previously existing character; and though more variable in early life than afterwards, it is in every case undergoing a continuous process of development. We have therefore to ask whether the acquisition of a virtuous character—of those instincts and modes of conduct which are prescribed by the moral law—be in all cases conducive to happiness, or whether (as is conceivable) there are natures which are made happier and others which are not made happier by such discipline? We have, on the former hypothesis, to ask whether a man with eyes is happier than a man without; and upon this, whether, supposing a man to have eyes, it is always worth his while to cultivate the art of seeing. And, thirdly, we have to observe that conduct is not fixed, even when character and circumstances are given, unless we include under 'circumstances' the particular set of thoughts and feelings which are present in the agent's mind. Hence we have to consider the problem (which, indeed, seems to be the most frequently discussed) whether we can discover any sanction for the observance of the moral law as such which would be equally operative upon all men irrespectively of their moral character. To exhibit to a selfish man the pleasures of sympathy is to suggest to him a motive for becoming virtuous; we are virtually telling him to cultivate a taste which he has

neglected; and this falls under the previous case. But we may also try to persuade him that even upon purely selfish or prudential grounds he ought to do good to his neighbour. In short, we may try to prove that obedience to the outward rule answers, whatever the internal motive. We have thus to answer three questions; first, whether the virtuous man as such is happier than the vicious; secondly, whether it is worth while on prudential grounds for the vicious to acquire the virtuous character; thirdly, whether it can be worth while in the same sense for the vicious man to observe the external moral law?

8. Before applying myself to the argument directly, I will make one remark. I think it altogether superfluous to dilate upon the old test that honesty is the best policy. The point has been so much laboured that, although there is abundant room for rhetoric, there is little need of argument. Considering how closely we are dependent upon our neighbours and upon their good opinion, and the enormous difficulty of retaining that good opinion without deserving it, there can be no serious doubt that, on the average, every man will find his account in observing the accepted moral code and acquiring the corresponding instincts. To be on good terms with your family, to avoid picking and stealing, to be decently sober, industrious, and good-natured, are rules of conduct so obviously expedient upon all grounds, that I will not burn daylight by insisting upon them. I assume a general coincidence between the dictates of morality and of prudence, and refer readers in need of further argument to the libraries of excellent treatises extant upon this familiar topic. I will add that in the following remarks I shall content myself, for the same reasons, with pointing out what I take to be the true issues, without seeking to estimate the weight of the appropriate evidence which may, as a rule, be taken for granted.

## II. *Happiness and Virtue*

9. Assuming, then, that virtue and prudence approximately coincide, whilst, on the other hand, we cannot assume that

they are absolutely coincident, how much further can we go? Can we fix with any greater precision the limits of possible duration? Does the new form into which the old arguments must be cast—for a change of form is all that can be regarded as possible—help us to discuss the question more effectively? Every writer is tempted to recommend his own scheme by showing that it establishes a closer connection between virtue and morality than the scheme of his rivals, and there is therefore a very natural tendency to pass too lightly over the less solid parts of ethical theory. We feel that what is wanting in reason will be made up by the good will of our audience. But if our aim is the discovery of the truth, we must be more upon our guard against the plausibilities of writers who wish to combine edification with argument. It would be highly agreeable to find sound reasons for holding virtue and prudence to be identical; it would be both wrong and foolish to make sham reasons where we have not got real ones.

10. If any man outside of a pulpit were to ask himself frankly what were the main conditions of human happiness, the answer would certainly include one proposition. The first, most essential, and most sufficient condition of happiness is health—health, of course, inclusive of cerebral, and so far of mental health; or, in the opposite phrase, an absence of every disease of mind or body. This, again, remains equally certain, whatever the difficulty of giving a satisfactory definition of health or disease. We can only say vaguely that health corresponds to the maintenance, and disease to the disturbance of a certain organic balance. But though we may not know precisely what they are, we cannot doubt their importance. A sound digestion, an active liver, strong nerves—briefly, all the qualities that go to a perfect physical machinery—form the best of all outfits for the voyage of life, so far as 'best' means most productive of happiness.

11. The question then arises, Can we push this theory any farther? Can we use the word 'health' in such a way as to include the right working of all the functions—including the intellectual and the emotional, as well as the purely animal—and then assert that health in this wide acceptation,

including the normal constitution of the 'moral sense,' is the most general and essential condition of happiness? Common sense seems to sanction some such doctrine. The *mens sana in corpore sano* is still the truest possible definition of the general condition of happiness, and we have no hesitation in applying the words 'healthy' and 'morbid' to purely mental phenomena. But it may be urged that the phrase implies a metaphor too vague to bear much argumentative stress. We are making an awkward transition from objective to subjective considerations, from the comparatively firm land of physiology to the treacherous morasses of psychology. We may assume, in virtue of the general principle, that health of brain is a condition of happiness at least as much as health of stomach; and more vaguely we may assume that health of brain has some correlation with health of mind. In extreme cases it is plain enough that a diseased brain implies madness and misery; but we are certainly unable to say what state of brain is correlated with those good and bad qualities which constitute the virtuous or vicious character, but which may vary from one pole to the other without exceeding the limits of perfect sanity. It is possible that we may be justified in inferring that some correlation exists, but our inference, even if well established, gives us next to no help. It asserts a relation between two things, one of which, the state of the brain, is hopelessly inaccessible, and can therefore afford no independent information. If vice, like some physical diseases, were due to the presence of a parasite in the tissues, the fact might help us to define its effects upon the organic state generally, and therefore upon the happiness of the agent. But as the existence of any physical condition is a hypothesis which cannot be confirmed by any direct test, and the condition is not likely to be of this definite and assignable kind, any such hypothesis would seem to be a mere curiosity. And yet I think that the analogy has a real force, and may be of use—not so much in suggesting new arguments as in giving more coherence and fulness to the old familiar argument. And this is as much as we can expect in ethical inquiries.

12. That health implies happiness may be asserted on purely empirical grounds. A simple induction may convince us that all states which imply the disturbance of the normal equilibrium are also states of misery. The conviction of this truth may not be much intensified, but it seems to be more or less 'explained'—that is, shown to be not merely a fact, but a necessary consequence of a wider principle—when we take into account the evolutionist doctrine, which I have everywhere assumed. The whole process of nature, upon that doctrine, implies, speaking briefly, a correlation between the painful and the pernicious, and thus (as I have argued at sufficient length) the elaboration of types in which this problem is solved by an ever-increasing efficiency and complexity of organisation. This holds equally from the simplest up to the highest species. And hence we may infer that the typical or ideal character at any given stage of development, the organisation which, as we may say, represents the true line of advance, corresponds to a maximum of vitality; to a maximum power of preserving the equilibrium or resisting morbid conditions, and therefore of a maximum accuracy in the correlation between painful and pernicious states. It seems, again, that this typical form, as it is the healthiest, must represent not only the strongest—that is, the most capable of resisting unfavourable influences—but also the happiest; for every deviation from it affords a strong presumption, not merely of liability to the destructive processes which are distinctly morbid, but also to a diminished efficiency under normal conditions. The man who has the weakness which predisposes to disease may not suffer so long as the disease is not actually generated, but he has presumably less power of enjoyment under any circumstances. A defect in the machinery will imply defective working, though actual decay may not take place in the absence of a special strain. What is true of the elaborate machinery of the physical organisation is also presumably true of the less accessible and definable machinery of that which is called the spiritual organisation.

13. The argument, again, whatever its weight, is not affected so far by the consideration that the phrase 'pernicious' must

be supposed to include conditions primarily injurious to the society instead of the individual. So long at least as we are speaking of the type, such an argument is irrelevant. For, as I have said at sufficient length, the type always and from the earliest period is moulded with an equally essential, though not an equally permanent, reference to the needs of the race. The typical or most effective form is the most effective relatively to the whole conditions, and the so-called social qualities are no less essential than those which immediately refer to the fixed material conditions. The reproductive and maternal functions of the animal are just as much a part of its nature as the digestive or the respiratory, and they must, therefore, have their proper place in the organisation. The same is equally true of the affections which become prominent in the rational animal capable of true social life. To the type, though not so fully to every individual, capacity for society is just as essential as capacity for breathing air. The whole organisation is moulded, we may say, with a view to this social function, and a defective constitution in this respect carries with it an implication of unfitness for the presumed conditions of life just as much as defects in any other direction.

14. This may suggest the bare outline of an argument which might be carried out and illustrated in much greater detail by those who have the necessary knowledge. However fully set forth, it would still, I suspect, remain exceedingly vague, and probably would have some logical gaps. It is scarcely to be regarded as an independent argument, but as affording a presumption that some generally admitted truths may be manifestations of a general scientific principle, and thus necessary under the known conditions of life. Whatever its vagueness, I have briefly stated it, because I think that it will enable us to suggest the best method of viewing the ordinary reasonings as to the relation between virtue and happiness.

15. And, in the first place, it is to be noted that upon this showing—as indeed upon any intelligible ground—the connection of happiness and virtue is conditional rather than absolute. For the true statement is, so far as we have gone,

that the typical man is so far the happiest. But the typical man, though he is, on my theory, the virtuous man, is also much more than is generally understood by that name. Happiness is the reward offered, not for virtue alone, but for conformity to what I have called the law of nature; that law, namely, of which it is the great commandment, 'Be strong.' If the problem at which the whole race is perpetually, even when unconsciously, labouring, is the production of the most vigorous type, and if pain and pleasure be the great incentives to labour, then we must admit that the prizes must be won by those who, on the whole, and considering all their relations, are the most efficiently constituted. As individual excellence assumes fitness for the social functions, so the social excellence clearly assumes fitness for the non-social functions; and therefore we must expect to find that happiness is correlated not only with the qualities which involve approval, but those also which excite admiration. Beauty, strength, intellectual vigour, æsthetic sensibility, prudence, industry, and so forth, are all implied in the best type, and are so far conducive to happiness.

16. This remark, obvious enough, seems to be implicitly disregarded in some of the attempts to prove that virtue brings happiness. For if virtue be taken in its narrower sense, and as implying chiefly the negative quality of habitual abstinence from forbidden actions, there is no reason to suppose that it coincides with happiness. It marks only a partial, and perhaps a subordinate, conformity to the essential conditions of life. Nature—if I may use that convenient personification for things considered as part of a continuous system—wants big, strong, hearty, eupeptic, shrewd, sensible human beings; and would be grossly inconsistent if she bestowed her highest reward of happiness upon a bilious, scrofulous, knockkneed saint, merely because he had a strong objection to adultery, drunkenness, murder, and robbery, or an utter absence of malice, or even highly cultivated sympathies. You can only raise a presumption that moral excellence coincides closely with a happy nature if you extend 'moral' to include all admirable qualities, whether they are or are

not the specifically moral products of altruistic feeling. The attempt to evade this conclusion is, of course, exceedingly natural. The practical moralist holds that the non-social qualities may be left to take care of themselves. The moral progress is dependent upon the extension of the sympathies, and, at any given period, the huge dead weight of selfishness is the great obstructive force. This is reflected in the theory of desert assumed by the ordinary morality of common sense. No man acquires a claim upon his neighbours by attending to his own wants. If, indeed, men were differently constituted —if, as is sometimes the case in individual cases, sympathy meant a morbid state of mind, a neglect of a man's own affairs, and a useless expenditure of emotion upon affairs which he could not control;—if, in short, men erred in the direction of being sentimental busybodies, it might become necessary to preach the opposite doctrine. We should then feel 'obliged' to the man who strenuously minded his own business and cultivated his own corner of the world, and might even come to think him the most 'meritorious.' For the present, there is no appreciable risk in this direction. There is an inexhaustible supply of selfishness and a most plentiful lack of public spirit; and therefore the aim of all moralists—rather of all moral human beings—will be to develop the side of human nature now most defective. Only when this essentially relative conception of merit is made absolute we get into all the perplexities which warn us that we are flying in the face of facts. If from the doctrine that virtue is meritorious we infer, not that the development of certain qualities is a necessary element of social progress, but that the ultimate end of the universe is to stimulate, and therefore to reward virtue, we get into the region of unrealities. If we can speak of an 'end' at all in that sense, it must, so long as we are in the scientific region, be the end towards which we can perceive some progress, namely, the development of a higher type—higher in respect of the general efficiency of the whole organism, and certainly not the production of virtuous beings simply; especially if by virtue we mean conformity to that narrower moral code which

is only a part of the 'law of nature.' To make any such theory square with the facts, we must either overlook the most palpable and undeniable phenomena of life, or we must take refuge in a world of arbitrary fancies.

17. We have still, however, to consider the bearing of this doctrine upon the relations between virtue and happiness; for it is possible, consistently with the theory, to regard that relation as approaching absolute coincidence. If, in fact, we are justified in assuming that the typical man is the happiest, and further that he is also the most virtuous, we may say that the connection is of a very intimate kind. It is true, indeed, that a limit is suggested, for it is only upon condition of an alliance with the other useful qualities that we suppose virtue to imply happiness. Now as most men are very far from possessing the other qualities in perfection, it may be that their virtues should be diminished in proportion in order to produce a maximum of happiness. This, for example, is sometimes insinuated in the cynical maxim which recommends us to keep our hearts cold and our stomachs warm, for this seems to be an epigrammatic assertion of the theory that warm affections are apt to be injurious to the digestion. Perhaps, indeed, its author meant to go further; he meant, it may be, to assert that the affections were, on the whole, sources of more misery than happiness, and he was probably one of the people who consider that your heart, like your liver, must be out of order whenever you become distinctly conscious of its existence. But omitting this, which will be presently noticed, the doctrine may be interpreted as an assertion that the pleasures of sympathy are worth having, but only on condition of their not interfering with sanitary considerations. And this, true or not, leaves a vague but very wide sphere for their possibly agreeable activity; and, in fact, it seems impossible to deny that a man's capacity for emotional excitement may be too great for his constitutional power; that he carries too much sail for his prudential ballast, and that he has, in this sense, too much virtue for happiness.

18. The same thing indeed may be stated in a less offen-

sive way. We may either say that the man has too much virtue for his prudence, or that he has too little prudence for his virtue. We mean in either case that he deviates from the type by a relative excess of those qualities which are, on an average of cases, defective. He is so far a less efficient being on the whole, and therefore less calculated for happiness, as his nature is ill-balanced; and the balance might be redressed either by strengthening the weaker or weakening the stronger side. But it is not true in an absolute sense that he is too virtuous for happiness; for by our assumption the virtue is the typical character considered under one aspect or in certain definite relations. The typical man represents the best kind of man who can be made out of given materials; and this involves both the qualities which excite admiration and those which excite moral approval. It is possible, indeed, that the supposed man may represent an altogether higher type than that implied in the actual moral standard; and we shall ask presently whether we have any right to suppose that such a being is presumably happier. In the ordinary case, the answer already given is sufficient. The assertion that a man has too fine feelings means equally he has too weak a fibre. He is deficient in one kind of excellence, though not in the moral kind; and any deficiency so far tells against his happiness. This, in fact, seems to be true of many of the men who have been made miserable by qualities which we rightly call good, because they are implied in the highest type, but which, taken by themselves, are an insufficient guarantee for happiness. Virtue, in the sense of benevolence or quick sympathies, will not supply the place of strong nerves and high vitality. The whole man does not represent the best type, for a race which developed its sympathies at the expense of its vitality as a whole would be, for that reason, an inferior race, and represent not progress but deterioration.

19. The general argument might be confirmed by going again over the chief virtues, considered in their individual instead of their social aspect, and showing how they implied greater fitness for the normal conditions of life. To do so would be to repeat much that I have said, and to insist upon

some of the familiar arguments, which I am content rather to take for granted; and it will be sufficient to indicate here a few obvious points, without fuller elaboration. Thus, in the first place, we might dwell upon the direct connection between the prudential and the moral aspect of sanitary rules. Excesses of sensuality may be forbidden for purely prudential reasons; a man may be temperate to avoid the pains of delirium tremens. The higher character is certainly not insensible to this motive, but he has the additional motives that by injuring his health he is injuring his power of discharging every social function, and that sensuality implies the dulling of his intellect and the deadening of his emotions; and thus, as I have said, it matters not whether some rules forbidding conduct which in its first incidence is 'self-regarding' be regarded as prudential or as moral. They are properly both. The same rule, 'Be temperate,' is applicable from the lowest to the highest stage of development, though the details of the code would vary as the constitution. The typical being at each stage would be temperate, whether from mere instinct, or from a reasoned observation of consequences, or from the wider considerations operative upon the being capable of genuine morality. It is not less important at the highest than at the lowest stages that the bodily health should be preserved; and a regard for sanitary rules is therefore implied in the typical being, and in the consistent code of rules expressing his mode of conduct, and embodying both the moral and the prudential law. Of course, there are special occasions on which the virtuous man will have to sacrifice health to other considerations; but the whole law must be so constructed as to harmonise with the sanitary code under normal conditions; for qualities which could only be acquired at the expense of health would not be useful to the society, and would therefore not represent the true line of moral advance. Saints, like poets, are subject to certain morbid tendencies; but the saintliness which necessarily promotes sickliness is the kind of saintliness which diverges from sound morality.

20. From this one might proceed to show how the

qualities more specifically moral fall in with the same principle. So, for example, the so-called intellectual virtues, the virtues of which truth and justice are the specifically moral expression, are also the product of what we naturally call a thoroughly sound mind; that is to say, a mind which works normally undisturbed by prejudice and passion, which has that courage to face disagreeable facts and to draw painful conclusions which does not imply absence of the emotions, but a power of restraining that irregular action which distorts and colours the intellectual vision. This would be followed, again, by reckoning up the vast internal advantages which result to the man whose intellect is thus healthy; for health implies a fitness for the normal conditions of life. And here I might expatiate upon the immense advantages to every man of imperturbable soundness of sense, and the undeviating honesty, justice, and trustworthiness which are its natural fruit, in a man's intercourse with his neighbours. It would, again, be equally easy to dilate upon the advantage of a healthy emotional nature, one which is neither morbidly overwrought nor deficient in strength and sensibility; for, in spite of the advantages attributed to a cold heart, or, more moderately, to a calculated selfishness, it must be admitted that some warmth of affection is necessary to happiness. So it may be doubted whether any considerable intellectual development is possible without a corresponding emotional development. Without it a man is a hog in mind as well as in heart. Of all conditions of health, again, one of the most obvious is steady and regulated exercise of the various faculties. To weaken the affections is to weaken all the motives to action which are capable of dominating and giving continuous interest to life. These supply the springs of all actions which can really satisfy a man's whole nature. Nobody will doubt that domestic peace is the most important of all conditions of happiness after bodily health; and next to it we may place the possession of interests which give motives for continuous though not exhausting labour. The great bulk of mankind is absorbed in bodily or other labour, which has little interest except as a means of support to themselves and their families;

and its pleasantness or otherwise must depend chiefly upon its healthiness or the reverse. The happiness of the whole life in such cases depends generally upon the domestic interests round which it centres; but beyond this, a man's happiness may be said to depend chiefly upon his power of associating agreeably with his fellow-men, and of devoting himself to some of those pursuits which imply public spirit, and therefore a capacity for sympathy in some of its multitudinous forms.

21. This hint at a familiar line of argument must suffice, except that I must once more take brief notice of an opinion which has encountered us in various forms. Here it declares that there is something of paradox in our fundamental theory. That theory asserts that a man is the happiest who does not aim at his own happiness. In order, then, to be happy we must not aim at happiness. We have, as it were, to keep a secret from ourselves, and to hit the mark by pretending to look in the opposite direction. I deny, however (not to go into other questions), that the argument is here relevant. Sympathetic feelings are just as much feelings, and, of course, feelings of the agent himself, as any other feelings. They cause real pains and pleasures; and there can be no *a priori* reason for supposing that a man endowed with sensibility to such pains and pleasures may not have, on the whole, more happiness than the man without. If, indeed, a man retaining precisely the same character could act either selfishly or unselfishly, it might seem strange to assert that he would get more happiness for himself when pursuing the happiness of others. But this involves a contradictory assumption. Unless a man be really altruistic his actions are really selfish, even when they aim incidentally at good to others. If he be altruistic, he is a different man from the purely selfish. The comparison, therefore, is not really between the happiness of the same man acting from one or the other motive, but between the happiness of two differently constituted people, one of whom has the capacity for a whole set of pains and pleasures which are denied to the other. Experience alone can tell us which constitution is the best

suited for happiness; and I have indicated the line of argument which, as I think, is conclusive in favour of the sympathetic character. The fact that the sympathetic man aims at the happiness of others can only appear, at first sight, to be an argument against him. For, in the first place, it makes him happy to aim at the happiness of others; and if this happiness has the awkward quality that it may lead to an actual sacrifice of his own future happiness, that is not less true of the selfish forms of enjoyment. Love of drink causes a good deal more 'self-sacrifice' in this sense than love of family. Gin is a more potent source of imprudence, even in the moderate sense, than family affection. The happiness which results from aiming at something different from our own future happiness makes no doubt conspicuous calls of self-abnegation, whereas the purely selfish motives always promise payment in kind to the agent himself. But the sympathetic motives have on their side the far greater intrinsic advantage that they promote ends more permanent, far richer in interest, and giving a proper employment to all the faculties of our nature, beside the intrinsic advantages which spring from friendly relations with the society of which we form a part. Nobody can doubt but a man would on an average—that is, if he has the necessary faculties—have an incomparably greater guarantee for happiness who was a devoted member, say of some political or religious body, than if he were exclusively bent upon satisfying one of the sensual appetites.

22. The arguments upon which I have touched, when duly expanded and enforced by appropriate evidence, may convince us of the truth of the proposition laid down. There is, namely, a necessary connection between virtue and happiness, inasmuch as there is a necessary connection between happiness and total efficiency (to put it briefly), and as virtue forms a necessary part of efficiency. Therefore in so far as a man is not virtuous he deflects from the type, and is less calculated for happiness. And this is quite consistent with the admission that he may deflect from the type in other ways, which do not entitle us to call him vicious, but which

are equally fatal to happiness. But there is an obvious gap in the argument, for at every step of the argument it is clear that we virtually assume a certain state of social development; for the 'typical' man is, roughly speaking, the best that can be made out of existing materials, and by the 'best' again, we have meant the best raw material for the formation of a vigorous society. But, again, it is plain that the type gradually changes, and though the change is for the most part slow, it becomes considerable by accumulation. Now if we suppose a man to be distinctly in advance of his age, we must say that he is more moral, or represents a superior type; but for that reason he is out of harmony with his social medium, and loses, therefore, all that part of the advantages of virtue which depends upon such harmony. In fact, it seems that the argument tends to show the advantage of the 'type,' considered as representing the best instantaneous development. Happiness will be the reward of fitness for the actual conditions, and therefore of an embodiment of the code of virtues actually recognised and possessing authority. Admitting that it is worth while, say, to be respectable, we may doubt whether it answers to be a moral hero. Or, again, we may say that as the advantages depend upon a certain agreement amongst men, I have comparatively small inducement to respect the agreement until other people can be brought to respect it also. In fact, it is plain that in many ways this is a very important consideration. A fine ear for music is said to be a source of torture to a man condemned to live amongst organ-grinders; delicate tastes unfit us for living amongst the coarse; even intellectual activity exposes a man to much discomfort if he has to live amongst the stupid. We may say summarily that, though the intrinsic advantages of the higher organisation are not changed, the extrinsic disadvantages due to life in an uncongenial medium go far to neutralise them.

23. It seems impossible to deny that this holds good of the moral qualities. Temperance is no doubt directly useful in so far as it is sanitary, and this will be equally true wherever man lives; but in a gross society, where the temperate man

is an object of ridicule, and necessarily cut off from participation in the ordinary pleasures of life, he may find his moral squeamishness conducive to misery. The just and honourable man is made miserable in a corrupt society where the social combinations are simply bands of thieves and his high spirit only awakens hatred; and the benevolent is tortured in proportion to the strength of his sympathies in a society where they meet with no return, and where he has to witness cruelty triumphant and mercy ridiculed as weakness. The domestic affections are the greatest sources of happiness, but if a man's wife be faithless and his children 'unnatural,' they are so many possibilities of exquisite torture; and similar truths hold of the wider social circles. All this tends to show, not only that a civilised man among savages, a gentleman among rogues, and so forth, is exposed to misery by reason of his superiority, but even that every reformer who breaks with the world, though for the world's good, must naturally expect much pain, and must be often tempted to think that peace and harmony is worth buying even at the price of condoning evil. 'Be good if you would be happy,' seems to be the verdict even of worldly prudence; but it adds in an emphatic aside, 'Be not too good.'

### III. *Moral Discipline*

24. If we admit (as I think that we must admit) this limitation upon the general principle, we virtually admit that an excessive virtue cannot be recommended to the selfish person upon grounds intelligible to him. And there is another, and, for most purposes, more important exception. Saints are rare, and will probably be little affected by prudential arguments. But there are plenty of selfish and sensual people to whom we may be unwilling to admit that they will not find it worth their while to be virtuous; and yet, may they not urge very forcibly that a higher strain of virtue is a questionable advantage to the lofty nature, and even an average degree of virtue may be a doubtful gain for lower natures? Granting, they

may say, for the sake of argument, that the virtuous are generally the happier for their virtue, is that equally true for people with small aptitudes in that direction? Why should they undergo the necessary discipline? You would not advise a man to try to learn music unless he had a rudimentary perception of the difference between harmony and discord; and if a man's appetite be gross and sensual and his sympathies slow, can you suggest to him any adequate motives for cultivating his moral sense?

25. This brings us to the second of the problems which I proposed to consider; and the general remark may be made, that the argument of a coincidence between happiness and virtue (so far as it exists) does not depend upon the mode in which a man becomes virtuous. I have assumed that moral progress (speaking roughly) does not imply an advance in the innate qualities, but a development through the social factor. Children, no doubt, start with infinitely varying aptitudes for moral culture, as they start with stomachs of varying strength of digestion; but in every case the action of the social medium is an essential factor in the result; and therefore the bare fact that the qualities have to be developed is not more peculiar to one individual than another, and can afford no presumption as to their connection with his happiness. If a man has the normal constitution, he will presumably be the happier for a moral development, as, if he has the normal intellect, he will derive the normal benefits from education, or, if he has a normal stomach, he will derive the normal benefits from observance of sanitary rules. The foregoing reasons are therefore equally applicable, though in particular cases moral culture may be thrown away upon uncongenial natures. Briefly, so far as a man is the happier for being virtuous, he is presumably the happier for a virtuous training. Still something too must presumably depend upon his aptitude for receiving it; and we may therefore ask the question, What are the inducements to a cultivation of virtue which exist independently of and antecedently to the virtue itself? What purchase have we in the rest of the character for stimulating a man to the development of his latent good qualities? To answer that

would be to say whether it is worth while for the man—reckoning the 'worth while' in terms already intelligible to him—to become a new man.

26. We may still rely to some extent upon the old principle. The process of moralisation is part of a complex process; and whether we consider the race, or the individual who repeats the race-experience, it depends upon the total intellectual, emotional, and physical growth. It follows that, although the undeveloped man may be blind to some of the advantages of the moral character, he may have an eye for the advantages of development in general, or of some particular kind of development with which the moral is necessarily bound up. He is accessible to all the ordinary prudential arguments as to the superior fitness for society of the moral character, even if he has himself a very slight appreciation of the more intellectual pleasures. And here comes in the true bearing of an argument which we have had to reject in a different shape. I see no use in asking whether Shakespeare or a pig is the best judge of the relative merits of pigwash and poetry, but it may be worth the pig's while to aim at making some approach to Shakespeare. The stupidest lad may see some of the advantages of sharpening his faculties: he will not see—for it is not true—that poetry is absolutely pleasanter than dinner, but he may easily see that he would be the happier if he had such an education as would make intellectual pleasure determine a much greater share of his total activities. He may see that stupidity is in a thousand ways a disadvantage; that it makes him inferior to competitors, despised by his equals, incapable of many enjoyments, and so forth. Even a prizefighter or a foxhunter finds a good brain useful up to a certain point, and has sometimes capacity enough to infer that a more vigorous brain would be still more useful. And putting the same remark generally, we may say that there is something like a general (though clearly not a universal) consent as to the advantage of a full development of our faculties. It is, I think, hopeless to produce a balance-sheet of pains and pleasures which would prove that the virtuous man gets a greater sum of pleasant emotions or a sum of emotions superior in quality; but it

may be proved that a man gains by growing as much as it is in him to grow, and that this necessarily involves moral growth.

27. The argument thus suggested differs from the ancient and familiar arguments of all practical moralists only by laying rather more stress than they generally do upon the intrinsic as distinguished from the extrinsic considerations. The ordinary arguments, 'Be industrious, and you may come to be Lord Mayor;' 'Be sober and steady, and your master may allow you to marry his daughter,' are very good arguments, so far as they go; and the practical moralist who scorned to make use of them would, I think, be very ill advised. I am only pointing out that such a statement does not exhaust the purely prudential argument. It is equally possible to prove to a man upon purely prudential grounds the advantage of cultivating such germs of good feeling as he may possess, and make him see that besides the direct pleasure derivable from their exercise and the incidental advantages derivable from the respect of his fellows, such culture is a necessary element in the full development of his nature, and therefore in his excellence in other faculties. The general statement has already been sufficiently indicated to show the advantages of a moralised nature. I have had to speak of this essential connection between the qualities embodied in the type, and what I am now saying is merely an application of the same principle. A one-sided development is always a disadvantage, as a defect in one faculty has some reaction upon those which form part of the same nature. We may undoubtedly find cases enough of an apparent divergence between different excellences. There are men of vast intellect who have been thoroughly selfish and unscrupulous; or, again, men of fine sensibilities and rich emotional natures who have become prophets of the baser elements in our nature; and, in such cases, it may seem as if eminence were the reward, not simply of indifference to, but of downright contempt for, moral considerations. Yet a fair examination would rather prove, I think, that this is an erroneous view. The statesman who is wanting in genuine moral feeling or sympathy for his

kind is under one of the greatest disadvantages possible; and a great man, even though the moralist may feel bound to condemn him, is generally in a kind of tacit alliance with morality, simply because the intellect which makes him perceive the realities of life reveals to him the advantage of being on the side of the strongest forces, and therefore, even in his own despite, of progress. But he is more powerful if he is impelled by more spontaneous sympathies. So, on the other side, we may be inclined to say that the highly emotional nature is at once a source of power over the sympathies of others and of many moral weaknesses; but it is as true to say that a development of the counterbalancing faculties will improve his morality without weakening his power over others. Incontinence of feeling is a source of weakness, though it may at times cause a superficial appearance of vigour. In proportion to the development of a man's intellect is not only his power but his need of sympathy. As he is able to identify himself with a larger part of the social organism, an identity between his own interests and the deepest interests of his fellows becomes more essential to his life.

28. This, again, falls in with the doctrine, which may be presented in various lights, of the unity of virtue, or of the statement that virtue has a positive, and vice only a negative meaning. This, in fact, is one way of putting the truth that virtue is one aspect of the development of a single type, whereas vice means any tendency towards disintegration. Consistency and harmony of conduct is therefore one characteristic of the virtuous, whilst vice is by its nature heterogeneous and leads to discord. If, for example, a man has a lofty intellect, and has yet overpowering sensual impulses, his nature is, as we say, at war with itself. For as, on the one hand, he is fitted for the pursuit of abstract truth and capable of wide sympathies and lofty ideals, he is, on the other hand, attracted by the lower kind of pleasure which can only be attained at the expense of the higher. He is a great scholar or statesman by fits, and at other times the slave of the bottle or of women. This kind of inconsistency or irrationality is in fact the expression of an ill-balanced character, and by 'ill-balanced' we

mean that which deflects from the type actually worked out by conformity to the condition of maximum efficiency.

29. And here we come upon a fresh form of the old difficulty; for we see that the discord of which we are speaking is the mark, as it were, of a hybrid nature—of a man who belongs in some respects to the higher, and in others to a lower type. And thus we have still to ask whether a man may not be also harmonious with himself if he belongs to a lower type, by some innate defect which unfits him for receiving the normal development, and whether in that case we can suppose that he will be the happier for moral discipline? Are there not, in fact, men whose sympathies are so dull and whose intellects are so torpid that a pursuit of sensual pleasure will always be more congenial to them, and that they will only derive misery for themselves, if not for others, by being forced into conformity with moral rules? Are there not idiots, and beings at every point of the scale between absolute idiocy and the loftiest genius? and if so, is it possible to say that all of them will be the happier for accepting the same law? A man with a capacity for sympathy may be the happier for having it fully developed. But suppose that he has none? If by any process you can persuade him to act like a benevolent man, will this fictitious benevolence repay him for abstinence from gin?

30. I can certainly see no reason to doubt the existence of human brutes—of men who not only do not possess, but cannot be made to possess, the instincts characteristic of the higher type. There are, I fully believe, men capable of intense pleasure from purely sensual gratification, and incapable of really enjoying any of the pleasures which imply public spirit or private affection or vivid imagination. It is true, generally, that each man has certain capacities for moral as for every other kind of development, and capacities which vary from the top to the bottom of the scale. No process of education or discipline whatever would convert a Judas Iscariot into a Paul or a John. And therefore, too, as a plain matter, we must admit that the ends which men pursue vary indefinitely, and that some men, possibly the mass of

men, are fitted for those positions in the social organism which do not demand any great activity of the higher faculties, or make any strain upon a man's devotion to the race or to truth. So far, again, as a man cannot be made moral, there is very little use in asking whether he would be the happier for being made moral. That is really to ask, as before, whether a different kind of man is happier. And thus, when we speak of the morality of the lower type, we must mean that the habit of obedience to the moral law may be impressed upon it, although the normal instincts which make such obedience the spontaneous fruit of his character may be very imperfectly developed, and therefore, as a general rule, that to some extent other instincts, such as the fear of punishment or of the contempt of his fellows, have been called into play, so as to make, as it were, a substitute for genuine morality. Is such a process likely to make him happier?

31. To this we must reply, that the external and prudential sanctions must generally remain in force for all men independently of their character. The evils of drunkenness, so far as they consist in disease or poverty, are applicable to and appreciable by the most sensual man, though he is not equally sensitive to the injury to his intellect. The objections to a want of honesty which depend upon the action of the policeman or the victims of fraud are applicable to every one in a civilised country. And generally the human hog as well as the genuine man will find his account in being on tolerable terms with the society in which he lives. But it certainly does not appear that this is equally true of the intrinsic sanctions. The sensualist who has enough prudence to avoid disease or general disgrace may get a quantity of pleasure from immoral practices. If by any device, by persuading him that he will go to hell for such indulgence, or by so strictly drilling him till abstinence has become a custom, and the sensuality has thus lost some of its power without making room for the development of the nobler feelings, it is hard to say why such restraints should make a man happier any more than physical restraints. The drunkard in a jail who cannot get his bottle is probably less happy than

when he is at large; and if his jail be made of prejudices forced upon his nature, and justifiable by motives which he cannot understand, it does not seem to make much difference. So, again, when a man has no real benevolence, but is forced into the outward practice of benevolence by custom and dread of public opinion, he is probably less at ease than if he were systematically cold-blooded. So the man who goes to church because he has always been taught to do so, without possessing the instincts which are gratified by religious worship, is probably more uncomfortable, even though he may not be a conscious hypocrite, than if he were frankly a 'worldling.' And thus, though it is very hard to sum up such considerations, our argument would seem to point to the conclusion that, as a very general rule at least, obedience to the external moral law is a matter of prudence for everybody; that it can be proved to almost any man that it is safer for him not to be at war with his fellows or indulge his appetites to excess; but that, on the other hand, it cannot be said with any confidence that if we were to consult the happiness of the agent exclusively, we should always try to infuse into him habits of virtue which transcend this rather moderate limit. It is possible to make a man less fitted for enjoyment under normal circumstances by trying to put too high a polish upon his moral nature, as it is possible to achieve the same result by cultivating tastes for art or intellectual study in those who have no natural aptitude.

32. It may be necessary to add that this is no sufficient reason for not trying to do it. Happily, as I have already said, the moral standard of society does not depend upon each man's estimate of what will be most for his own happiness, but much more upon the general conviction of every man that it is his interest to live in a moral world. We may, indeed, desire to see this conviction a great deal stronger than it is. Yet even the sensualist, who, for his own part, expects to get the greatest amount of enjoyment out of life by indulging his appetites, is generally anxious that the world at large should be guided by different principles. Doubtless

the estimate which every man forms of the general conditions of happiness is greatly biassed by his character, and the utopia of the drunkard is very different from that of the philosopher. Still the moral standard is not formed by a simple generalisation of each man from his own experience and a desire for the greatest possible dividend of such pleasure as he can appreciate, but is worked out by the general social process, which virtually decides the observance of certain rules to be essential to the general welfare, which, again, may imply conduct and character very different from the private standard of the man who honestly accepts the general estimate. And finally, whatever doubts we may have as to the possibility of making any given person moral, and of contributing to his private happiness by doing so, we can have no scruples in making him as moral as we can. For we cannot know until we have tried what capabilities of development there may be in him, and the general principle that moral development involves good to him, and still more to the society, is sufficiently demonstrated to compel us to do what we can. The danger of failing on the other side is the only one worth notice in any given case.

### IV. *Self-Sacrifice*

33. This brings us to the last question proposed, which has indeed been more or less answered by anticipation. Have we any right to say, not merely that the good are happier than the bad, or that moral development is calculated to make a man happy, but that in every particular case a man, whether good or bad, will be the happier for acting rightly? After the conditional answer which we have been forced to give even to the more general questions, it is impossible that we should expect to answer this more confidently. I am, for my part, convinced that there are occasions upon which we have to choose between two masters. This way is the path of duty; that is the path of happiness. We shall at times have to choose, and to choose with our eyes open. Let us take as illustration any of the famous cases of moralists. Regulus

preferred death by torture to dishonour. Was he acting for his own happiness? To make the question intelligible, we must suppose that Regulus could have acted differently; and this may be taken to mean either that he could have declined martyrdom if his character had been different, or that he could have declined it, his character remaining unaltered. On the first hypothesis I must first remark, that the greater the virtue the less the sacrifice in acting virtuously—a doctrine which has a paradoxical sound only if we understand the 'self' in self-sacrifice to be the man without his virtue, and his virtue to be something external. The stronger the virtuous impulse, the greater the force of other motives which it can override, and so far the greater the 'sacrifice' which it can impose. But the less, for the same reason, is the sacrifice of the whole nature implied in a given act, for the gratification of that impulse counts for more in the whole nature. Now, we may suppose a man so constituted that death by torture would imply less misery than life in disgrace; and still more easily, so constituted that a certainty of speedy death would imply a less prospect of evil than the certainty, not of life, for life is always precarious, but of an escape from death with disgrace for the indefinite remainder of life. Would, then, a man in the position of Regulus have greater chance of happiness for possessing such a sense of honour as would determine him to martyrdom? I think that it is impossible to answer in the affirmative. Many men live 'infamous and contented' after saving life at the expense of honour. Even if we suppose Regulus to have had so strong a sense of honour as to make his martyrdom a 'bed of roses,' I do not see my way to deny that a man of less virtue might have easily complied, and have passed a very agreeable old age at Capua as a retired general officer, deriving an amount of pleasure out of life greater than any which fell to Regulus. In this sense, Regulus's virtue was, under the given circumstances, a disadvantage to him personally. A less virtuous man would have been in that sense better adapted to the position. But the question generally has a different sense. We assume in asking it that Regulus might have acted in either way con-

sistently with his character. His state of health, the excitement of seeing his home or his family, the presence of some symbol associated with patriotic sentiment or vividly recalling the pangs of torture—briefly, that intricate play of varying and conflicting emotions which gives rise to the illusion of 'free-will'—might cause him to act in either way. Again, I do not see my way to any definite answer. The answer would really depend upon qualities of character not assigned in our assumed data. A lapse from a high standard may embitter the whole life of an honourable man. It may embitter it so keenly as to make such a life worse than death; and in that case, a choice of death would be a choice of happiness. But the opposite hypothesis is certainly conceivable. I see nothing contrary to the recognised laws of human nature in supposing that Regulus might commit himself to martyrdom in a moment of enthusiasm, and be afterwards overcome by a weakness which would double the pangs of death; whilst, on the other hand, had he given way, he might have made the discovery—not a very rare one—that remorse is amongst the passions most easily lived down. Briefly, then, I admit in both senses that Regulus may have acted in defiance of a calculation of happiness; and I may add that upon my principle the fullest recognition of the fact might be quite compatible with such action. It may be true both that a less honourable man would have had a happier life, and that a temporary fall below the highest strain of heroism would have secured for him a greater chance of happiness.

34. All this, again, may be applied to much more ordinary cases. It is true, so far as I can see, that not merely heroic virtue, but even virtue of the ordinary kind, demands real sacrifices on some occasions. When we say to a man, 'This is right,' we cannot also say invariably and unhesitatingly, 'This will be for your happiness.' The cold-hearted and grovelling nature has an argument which, from its own point of view, is not only victorious in practice, but logically unanswerable. Not only is it impossible to persuade people to do right always—a matter of fact as to which there is not

likely to be much dispute—but there is no argument in existence which, if exhibited to them, would always appear to be conclusive. A thoroughly selfish man prefers to spend money on gratifying his own senses which might save some family from misery and starvation. He prefers to do so, let us say, even at the cost of breaking some recognised obligation —of telling a lie or stealing. How can we argue with him? By pointing out the misery which he causes? If to point it out were the same thing as to make him feel it, the method might be successful, and we may hold that there is no reasonable being who has not at least the germs of sympathetic feeling, and therefore no one who is absolutely inaccessible to such appeals. But neither can we deny, without flying in the face of all experience, that in a vast number of cases the sympathies are so feeble and intermittent as to supply no motive capable of encountering the tremendous force of downright selfishness in a torpid nature. Shall we then appeal to some extrinsic motive, to the danger of being found out, despised, and punished? Undoubtedly that will be effective as far as it goes. But if, for any reason, the man is beyond the reach of such dangers; if he is certain of escaping detection, or so certain that the chance of punishment does not outweigh the chance of impunity, he may despise our arguments, and we have no more to offer. He may say—and, as it appears to me, may say with truth—'I shall personally get more pleasure from doing wrong than from doing right, and I care for nothing but my personal pleasure.' The first statement may be—it often is—undeniably true. Of the second he is the only judge, and though we may prove that he ought to be differently constituted, or that a virtuous man would be differently constituted, we do not thereby alter his nature, or even prove by any arguments accessible to him that it is worth his while to alter it. Against some people, in short, the only effective arguments are the gallows or the prison. Unluckily they are arguments which cannot be brought to bear with all the readiness desirable, and therefore I think it highly probable that there will be bad men for a long time to come.

35. I see no use in shutting or trying to shut our eyes to so plain a truth. As regards the world with which alone scientific reasoning can have any concern, it is a simple statement of undeniable facts, or of facts which can only be denied in some potential sense—that is to say, not really denied at all. The theologian and the philosopher are, indeed, willing to admit it so far as the world of experience goes, and sometimes inclined to insist upon it as affording a presumption in favour of a better constituted world beyond or underlying; and I have here nothing to say to their solutions. But the attempt to evade the truth as regards the existing state of things is often made, and leads, as I fancy, to a weary waste of sophistry. The attempt to establish an absolute coincidence between virtue and happiness is in ethics what the attempting to square the circle or to discover perpetual motion is in geometry and mechanics. I think it better frankly to abandon the hopeless endeavour. Indeed, this admission, true or false, would seem to be but the inverse side of a doctrine which most moralists have laboured, and, as I think, successfully laboured to establish. When we listen to the careful demonstrations of the reality of benevolence, when we are told again and again that a man may, and in fact does, sacrifice his own happiness to the good of his fellows, we are edified and convinced. But we receive something of a shock when the edifying moralist suddenly turns round and tells us that the sacrifice is only temporary—that is to say, that it is, after all, unreal. It is still more surprising when this is presented, and precisely by the moralists who profess to take the loftiest theory, not merely as expressing the fact, but as an *a priori* truth deducible from the very nature of things. For what can this be but to fall back upon the purely egoistic doctrine? Self-sacrifice, says the egoist, is impossible. Yes, agrees his opponent, it is impossible. The only distinction is that the egoist denies that a man can ever take anything but his own happiness for an ultimate reason. The lofty moralist denies that anything but his own happiness can ever be the ultimate result. He thus comes to recommend a game of self-deceit like that already

noticed—selfishness, not abolished, but banished to the unconscious motives. 'You are to act,' he says, 'at every given moment from a genuine desire for the good of others, but you are also to be intimately convinced that whatever is for their good is also for your own happiness. When acting, you are to ignore this esoteric doctrine; when philosophising, you are to hold to it as a necessary truth.' Nothing can exhibit the plausibility of the egoistic theory more forcibly than this process, by which its professed antagonists manage quickly to sidle round into adopting its fundamental tenet.

36. For my part, I accept the altruist theory, and I accept what I hold to be its legitimate and inseparable conclusion—the conclusion, namely, that the path of duty does not coincide with the path of happiness. I should meet the objection (so far as it can be met at all) that this is an immoral doctrine, not by trying to prove that in some way the immediate loss will be repaid, but by reasserting the doctrine of altruism. By acting rightly, I admit, even the virtuous man will sometimes be making a sacrifice; and I do not deny it to be a real sacrifice; I only deny that such a statement will be conclusive for the virtuous man. His own happiness is not his sole ultimate aim, and the clearest proof that a given action will not contribute to it will therefore not deter him from the action. To a great extent this is true of every man who has the normal faculties. There is scarcely any man, I believe, at all capable of sympathy or reason, who would not in many cases unhesitatingly sacrifice his own happiness for a sufficient advantage to others. Almost every mother would die or expose herself to sufferings which can never be repaid for the good of her infant; and though maternal love affords the most perfect example of devotion to others, and is of course much stronger than most other benevolent feelings, I think that the same principle is illustrated even in those commonplace acts of good nature of which almost every man is capable.

37. I do not wish to exaggerate any more than to extenuate the extent of this fundamental discord. I believe it to exist, but I do not believe that it materially modifies the

ordinary statement. I take for granted that as a rule it is prudent to be moral, and still more unequivocally that it is prudent to encourage the morality of our neighbours. But I also admit that this argument in favour of morality cannot be rightly put in the form, Morality is always and necessarily coincident with prudence. In exhorting a man to be virtuous, we really exhort him to develop his nature upon the lines which the experience of the race has conclusively proved to coincide with the general conditions both of social and individual welfare. This is to exhort him to acquire a quality of character which, under normal conditions, and in the vast majority of particular cases, will make him the happier because better fitted for the world in which he lives, capable of wider and more enduring aims, and susceptible to motives which will call out the fullest and most harmonious play of all the faculties of his nature; but it is also to exhort him to acquire a quality which will in many cases make him less fit than the less moral man for getting the greatest amount of happiness from a given combination of circumstances. I advise a man to acquire habits of temperance on a simple calculation of pleasure, from wider prudential considerations, and upon purely moral grounds. In each case the argument is conclusive, but in each case it admits of certain exceptions. Temperance will, as a rule, procure him most pleasure, because it will make him healthy; but if he were certain to die to-morrow, he might get most pleasure by being drunk to-night. It will make him fitter for work, and therefore, as a rule, secure him a more comfortable position; but, in particular cases, it might lose him the favour of some immoral person who could do him a service. It will, again, make him more virtuous and so far a better husband and father; but it is still as before easy to imagine particular cases in which the very strength of the feelings which form the best guarantee for happiness may cause the most exquisite pain, and make him miserable in proportion to their strength. If, indeed, life were—as seems to be implied in the theories of some moralists—a series of detached acts, in each of which a man could calculate the sum of happiness or misery

attainable by different courses, and calculate them without reference to his character, the whole argument would be different. But this is precisely what it is not. Every man starts with an inborn set of qualities which are gradually moulded, developed, or suppressed by the circumstances in which he is placed, and by the inherent processes of growth and decay. The happiness or misery due to any set of external conditions depends essentially upon the disposition upon which they operate. Therefore it may be, or rather it plainly is, necessary for a man to acquire certain instincts, amongst them the altruistic instincts, which fit him for the general conditions of life, though in particular cases they may cause him to be more miserable than if he were without them. And thus, again, the acquisition of altruistic feeling may be recommended on purely prudential grounds, although these grounds can never supply an exhaustive statement of the motives; and some power of altruistic feeling is presupposed in the very capacity to become moral. But it does not follow that on special occasions prudence and virtue will coincide; and, as a matter of fact, I think that they often emphatically differ.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

1. I HAVE reached a conclusion which suggests further controversy. What is it that I have done, supposing my arguments to be satisfactory; and what is it that, even upon that hypothesis, still remains to be done? These are questions to which, for reasons to be immediately assigned, I cannot give a full answer. Yet some answer is required, so far at least as an indication of my own view of the case can be regarded as an answer.

2. I concluded my statement by expressly admitting that one great difficulty must remain unsolved. Rather, I assert that it is intrinsically insoluble. There is no absolute coincidence between virtue and happiness. I cannot prove that it is always prudent to act rightly or that it is always happiest to be virtuous. My inability to prove those propositions arises, as I hold, from the fact that they are not true. This admission does nothing to diminish our belief in the surpassing importance of morality and of its essential connection with social welfare; and further, it does not diminish the intrinsic motives to virtue, inasmuch as those motives are not really based upon prudence. But I cannot go further. I do not think that any one has really gone further except in words; nor do I see any reason to expect that any one will go further. The problem is bound up in the old one of the origin of evil. Given the existence of misery or vice, you may conceivably 'explain' them by showing what are the general conditions under which they exist; but you cannot, without contradiction, explain them away. Yet, until you have explained them away, your explanation is

pronounced to be insufficient. If so, all explanation will be insufficient, so long as vice and misery exist, or rather so long as it can be truly said that they ever have existed. The problem of the association between misery and virtue is really part of this ancient puzzle; and when one enigma is solved, perhaps the other may be clear. This, however, will appear more clearly as we proceed; for we may still ask whether we cannot attempt some solution or modification of our difficulties by going beyond the limits hitherto accepted.

3. One distinction must be made at starting. Whatever more may be said, it is perfectly clear that there is a great deal more to be done. To expound the nature of any evil is not the same thing as to cure it. A physiologist has fulfilled his duty when he has stated what are the actual processes of life, and therefore what are the conditions of healthy or diseased life. The physician applies these laws when he cures diseases, and the sanitary reformer when he secures the observation of healthful modes of life. It would be manifestly absurd to condemn the physiologist because he does not make disease impossible or induce men to live healthily. He has done all that is proper to him in his scientific capacity when he has said, for example, 'Such and such are the processes implied by drunkenness, and such and such are the necessary and probable consequences.' He shows what are the appetites gratified by drunkenness as well as the evils which it causes. So long as he is a man of science, he has simply to observe facts and formulate laws; he is successful in so far as his observations and generalisations correspond to the fact, and he has nothing to do with consequences or applications. If, after hearing all that he has to say, I prefer drink and delirium tremens, that is not his concern in his scientific capacity. His aim is the discovery of truth, and his success is proportionate to the truths which he discovers. With the physician or reformer the case is of course different. One has to cure disease and the other to suppress bad customs. The end of each is to produce a given result, and his success is measured by the attainment. And therefore, though one chief aim of physiology

is to furnish means for suppressing disease, yet the theory is 'right' as it most exactly reflects the truth, as the conduct is 'right' which most accurately attains the end. The theory would be useless unless it led to conduct, and the conduct could not succeed unless it were guided by the theory; but we do not expect the theory to cure diseases by itself, and therefore the correctness of his theories does not excuse the physician who fails to effect a cure.

4. The same, as I take it, is the relation between the scientific and the practical moralist. The scientific moralist has fulfilled his task when he has explained what virtue and vice actually are, what are their normal consequences to society and the individual, and what are the conditions under which they are generated. He has done all that he can do if he has laid down true propositions upon such matters. He tries to discover what is the 'form' of morality, what is its intrinsic or essential character, how good or bad men act, what are their motives, and what the normal consequences of their actions. The physiologist, as I have said, may ask similar questions in regard to health and disease. But the effect of a belief in conclusions attained, whether in ethics or in physiology, will depend upon the character of the believer. 'This is wrong, and I choose to act wrongly;' 'This is unwholesome, and I choose to risk my health,' represent states of mind not only possible but common. It is part of the ethical problem to determine what character is implied in them. We should contradict the commonest experience if we denied their possibility. The practical moralist who tries to raise the standard of morals or to influence a particular man must start from the science; and his success will be measured by the degree in which he affects conduct. But it is an error to try the scientific moralist by the test applicable to the practical moralist. His theory is sound, like every other theory, so far as it explains the facts; and it must explain, and therefore admit, the existence of vice as well as virtue. And this seems to be overlooked when an ethical theory is condemned because it does not of itself constrain the will as well as convince the intellect. That is

to confound the art with the science, or practice with theory. A theory is a systematic statement of belief, and the only question about a belief is in any and every case whether it is true or false, not whether it does or does not produce any assumed effect upon conduct. In this respect the analogy is complete between the scientific and practical moralist and the scientific and practical physiologist. It is as idle to suppose that an ethical theory will show vice to be impossible as to suppose that a physiological theory will show disease to be impossible. If that were the case, we should happily be able to dispense with theories altogether.

5. Philosophers have attempted to evade this difficulty in many ways. They have laboured indefatigably so to state the ethical principle that disobedience may be 'unreasonable' in the same sense as refusal to believe in a mathematical demonstration. Every such attempt is doomed to failure in a world which is not made up of working syllogisms and where the will and the reason mean different things. But the difficulty recurs so often, that I may attempt to explain my opinion by some further considerations. It is sometimes said that the moralist has to treat of what 'ought' to be, not of what 'is.' To which I might reply that there is no real disjunction, and that it would be just as reasonable to say that the medical writer treats of the healthful and the morbid, and not of the actual. The moral instincts are realities, and in treating of them, I treat of morality. But the intention of the remark seems to be different. The implied assertion (if I understand it rightly) is to this effect: The man of science aims in all cases at the discovery of 'laws,' where by 'law' we mean nothing but generalised statements of fact. But the moralist has to do something different from this; he has to establish 'laws' in the juridical sense; meaning, therefore, commands, or at least formulæ of some kind which have a 'coercive' action upon the will. Hence there is, it is said, a real difference between the cases. The physicist proves (say) that the planets attract each other; and the fact so summarised takes place by a mechanical necessity, or independently of the

human rule. The sociologist again (if the possibility of such a science be admitted) obtains, or would obtain, formulæ of the same kind; that is to say, 'All men do so and so,' 'Good men do this,' 'Bad men do that,' and so forth. This can never amount to more than a statement of facts. The forces at play now include desires and volitions; but the man of science lays down social rules as the physicist lays down his formulæ, as statements of what will invariably or 'necessarily' happen. Assuming, therefore, that he can obtain such formulæ, they cannot be moral laws; for the moral law says, not, 'This and this is true,' but, 'This and this is to be done.' It is a command or a law proper, not a law in the derivative or scientific sense. But the moralist has to discover laws proper, not laws metaphysical, and therefore has to do with the 'ought,' not with the 'is.'

6. To this I must reply, so far as I dissent, by giving my own view. The statement just given seems to me to be accurate, but leads to an apparent difficulty only when we confound the spheres of practice and theory, or confound the meanings of 'fact' and 'truth.' When dealing with beliefs, we can only ask whether they are true or false. When, on the contrary, we are dealing with commands, it is nonsense to ask whether they are true or false; we can only ask whether they do or do not operate—that is, compel obedience. So I do not properly 'believe' or 'disbelieve' in a command: I simply obey or disobey it; though I may, of course, believe or disbelieve that the command has been given or that certain consequences will follow disobedience. But although it is not proper to use the words 'fact' and 'truth' as though they were synonymous, every truth is, of course, concerned with facts; and there are truths and beliefs which are concerned with commands as with facts of every kind. And further, a belief may be necessarily implied in a command, and in such a way that a command may be the necessary result of a belief, which, indeed, must generally be the case where the belief is a belief about conduct. The 'law,' in the case of physical inquiries, may be accepted without any effect upon the character. The accept-

ance of the law of universal gravitation has no bearing whatever upon the ends of the believer. It will sometimes affect his means, as in the case of calculations founded upon the assumption of its truth; it will not affect his principles. But the case is different when conduct is the subject-matter of the science. The belief, then, is inseparably united with a feeling. The belief that all good men act in a certain way must have a reaction upon my character if I have any feeling in regard to goodness and to good men. The effect will depend upon my previous character, but in really accepting it my character will also be modified.

7. Let us apply this more closely to the case. There is a law, using the word in the strict sense of 'positive law,' against murder. From a scientific point of view this is simply a statement of facts. The sociologist asserts the existence of a certain social order with appropriate customs and instincts, one result of which is that detected murderers are liable to hanging. The psychologist recognises and tries to explain the effect produced by this knowledge upon the mind of an intending murderer. Their conclusions are expressible as statements of general fact or scientific 'laws'; murderers are hanged at certain stages of social development; all men of a certain character are deterred by the fear of hanging and so forth. The effect, again, which is produced in a given case is a special instance of these laws. When the scientific observer has laid them down, he has done all that he can do. The man, again, who is about to commit a murder knows the facts and has to choose. The choice is determined not merely by the recognition of the scientific truth but by the man's character. He hates his enemy, and is aware that by gratifying his hatred he runs a risk of the gallows. His action is the correlative of the struggle between fear and hatred. His conduct is one of the facts with which the man of science has to deal. But in any case, the bare intellectual recognition of the general proposition, 'Murderers are liable to hanging,' is not sufficient to determine them. The recognition will operate differently according to his character. If it is a genuine recognition, involving a realisa-

tion of all the facts implied, it is but the logical aspect of an emotional process, which is symbolised by the words. He must have a foretaste of the various horrors connected with hanging; and the painful foretaste of an appearance on the gallows will struggle with the pleasurable foretaste of gratified revenge and determine his conduct. For him, the terror, the hatred, are facts; actual forces which move him one way or the other, and which are rendered possible by means of the intellectual foresight, as it, again, is only possible through them; that is, neither of them could exist separately.

8. We may say the same of the moral law. The sociologist and the psychologist have to describe the nature and laws of action of the moral instincts, as in the other case of the instincts which support the political order. And in the same way, the agent who recognises the fact that murder is wicked as well as criminal will act according to the resultant of the various emotions set in play through his recognition of that accepted principle. These emotions, again, it must be repeated, may vary widely. The moral sense may, perhaps generally does, correspond simply to an unreasoning instinct, and the recognition that murder is wrong may involve nothing but the action of this unexplained feeling. It means that the hatred of the victim is checked by the awakening of the acquired instinct which makes bloodshed hateful. The thought, again, that murder is wrong may call into play other emotions, according to the moral theories accepted by the agent. It may bring to his mind the wrath of his God, or the injury to society, or the hatred which others would feel for him, or the prospect of lasting remorse, or various other associated emotions. In any case, it means the perception of other modes of contemplating the proposed action besides that which suggested the murderous impulse, and the bringing into play of the various emotions bound up with these perceptions. The command is only a moral command so far as it appeals to the intrinsically moral motives, whatever they may be. It represents a force in so far as the recognition of its truth involves the action of the strictly moral instincts.

9. We may now return to the difficulty. It is quite true

that the simple scientific statement does not, upon my showing, necessarily carry with it a governing principle. That is to say that a theory of motives is not itself a motive. The admission that the moral laws are statements of essential conditions of social welfare will not even tend to make me moral, if I care nothing for society. If I am incapable of sympathy, no proof of the advantages of good actions to others will induce me to sacrifice myself. This, however, is merely to say, with every moralist who ever wrote, that the bare moral maxims will do nothing without a thorough training of the emotional nature. We must not merely learn that our actions affect the happiness of others, but must acquire the habit of feeling for them. It may, indeed, be said that a nominal acceptance of the formula can scarcely be called a real belief in it, unless the meaning of the symbols is realised; and so far to teach me that my conduct hurts others is to make me feel for others if I am capable of the sympathy, whilst it has no proper meaning for me unless I am capable of sympathy. And this is so far true that a genuine assimilation of the moral precepts may be assumed to imply a growth of moral sentiment. To learn really to appreciate the general bearings of moral conduct is to learn to be moral in the normally constituted man, though we must always make the condition that a certain aptitude of character exists. But in saying this I have only recognised the fact that beyond the science of morality there is the art which depends upon it.

10. This, however, is regarded as an insufficient statement. After all, it is said, the moral system remains insufficiently clenched. All that it comes to is, 'If I am wicked, I shall commit murder; if I am not wicked I shall not.' The agent, therefore, simply recognises his motives, but cannot alter them or properly approve or condemn them. The judge can say, 'I will force you to refrain from crime.' The moralist can only say, 'I will give you reasons for refraining *if* you are already good.' Hence arises the desire of moralists to prove that there is some reason binding every man simply as reasonable. The search, if I am right, is hopeless; as all motives in every case involve another element. In any and

every case, the compulsion, legal and moral, must depend upon the character. The legal sanction appeals to feelings more universal than moral, though the moral has the advantage of covering actions which the legal cannot touch; but even the legal sanction may cease to be effective in conceivable cases. Its highest penalty depends for efficacy upon the love of life; and there are many circumstances under which a man may cease to care for life, and so far be beyond the power of the legislator. The moralist, undoubtedly, can only appeal to people who have certain instincts; for an appeal to extrinsic motives is merely a cutting of the knot. Unless a man has certain sensibilities the moralist has absolutely no leverage. This I take to be a simple fact, undeniable in practice, and, so long at least as we have to do with science, a fact which must be recognised like any other. But I must guard against one misinterpretation which seems to be implied in the above statement. It is true (as I hold) that if a man is without any conscience you cannot move him by speaking of right and wrong; but it seems to be inferred that this is in some way a justification of his acting wrongly. This is a sophistry. It is capable of proof—scientific proof, if you will—that murder is wrong—'wrong' as opposed to the rules actually accepted and regarded with reverence in every civilised society, and wrong, again, as being opposed to that underlying moral code to which actual morality is an approximation, and which expresses the conditions of social welfare. I may, therefore, prove to the murderer that he is acting wickedly. But he says, 'I have no conscience.' If he adds, 'Therefore I shall commit murder,' his reasoning is perfectly sound. If he goes on, 'Therefore I am right in committing murder,' he is contradicting himself. The true inference is, therefore, 'I am wrong by my own confession.' Right conduct is the conduct dictated by a conscience, or the conduct (as I have put it) of the ideal man. To allege the absence of good motive as a justification is nonsense, because justification means the proof of good motives. It is, therefore, a simple 'objective' fact that a man acts rightly or wrongly in a given case, and a fact which may be proved

to him ; and, further, though the proof will be thrown away if he is a moral idiot, that is, entirely without the capacities upon which morality is founded, the proof is one which must always affect his character, if we suppose the truth to be assimilated, and not the verbal formula to be learnt by rote.

11. Here we are approaching the inevitable free-will puzzle. I am content to say once more that, so long as we are in the region of science, it is idle to evade the plain facts. Many men are wicked ; no man is perfect. No dexterous logic will make the wicked man good, nor, so long as it appeals to motives which they cannot appreciate, will it convince them that it is well to be good. The man of science, indeed, sometimes tries to evade this painful conclusion. He points out that although men are now so constituted that right conduct is often painful and virtue itself not unconditionally desirable, this discord may be resolved in some better state. Progress means approximation to some utopia in which our natures will be so improved that we shall always sympathise with each other, and society be so happily constituted that the conduct which gives to any man the greatest chance of happiness will give it an equal advantage to his neighbours. Such speculations are legitimate. They may be useful in defining an end towards which all well-wishers to their fellows may desire to act, and they may serve also to bring out the fact that altruistic emotion does not involve self-sacrifice in essence, but only by accident. Yet it does not solve the difficulty for us. Speculations about the future of society are rash ; and the knowledge—if we could attain the knowledge—that our descendants would be better off than ourselves would not disprove the existence of the present evil. Moreover, various doubts suggest themselves. We cannot tell that progress will be indefinite. It seems rather that science points to a time at which all life upon the planet must become extinct ; and the social organism may, according to the familiar analogy, have its natural old age and death. In any case there is one obvious difficulty. Progress means a stage of evolution. Evolution from the earliest to the latest stages means a continuous process of adjustment, which is

always determined by the fact that at any existing stage the adjustment is imperfect. Complete equilibrium, or an elimination of this discordant element, would therefore mean, not perhaps stagnation, but a cessation of progress, an attainment of the highest arc of the curve, after which we would only expect descent.

12. Consider, in fact, what is meant by moral progress. It is an essential part of a development in virtue of which the society is more vigorous, the individual is bound by further-reaching sympathies with his fellows, and thus a more comprehensive code of conduct is recognised. The member of the higher society is more fully conscious of the nature and consequences of his actions than the member of the lower society. In this sense, therefore, he is more moral. The higher man is affected by sufferings to which the lower man is indifferent. And thus, again, conduct which would require abnormal excellence at the lower stage has become normal as the corresponding instincts have become definitely organised in the higher. But, in another sense, the moral progress is less clear ; that is to say, the savage deviates less frequently than the civilised man from the code recognised in each case. The savage law is lower, but it is more regularly observed. So, if we go back to the animals, in whom morality proper does not exist, the obedience to instinct is more regular still. Sin comes through the law, as it is only when the agent is capable of laying down general rules that he begins to be sensible of deviations from them. If we measure both stages of development by the same law, we may say that the higher is more moral than the lower. If we measure each by its own law, the observance is more uniform in the lower than the higher ; as, in fact, a greater mobility and flexibility of character seems to be necessarily implied in the higher type. Moral progress involves a constant laying down of new problems. Old evils are avoided, old hostilities reconciled, the whole life is fuller and more vigorous ; but the process implies at the same time that the new capacities and sensibilities developed constantly bring with them new evils or difficulties which again require to be reconsidered. A

nation acquires new mechanical powers, but it has not yet the habits necessary to turn them to account, and they are so many temptations to immoral indulgence. Sympathy expands, but, as not guided by knowledge, leads to rash changes productive of evil as well as good. To improve, whether for the race or the individual, whether in knowledge or sympathy, is to be put in a position where a new set of experiments has to be tried, and experience to be bought at the price of pain. And as this seems to be essentially implied in all progress that we can imagine, I see no reason to suppose that pain will be eliminated, or that it will be so distributed that there shall never be a divergence between the painful and the pernicious either to man or society. From the scientific point of view we may hold that evolution implies progress—progress at any rate to a point beyond our present achievements; and, further, progress implies a solution of many discords, and an extirpation of many evils; but I can at least see no reason for supposing that it implies the extirpation of evil in general or the definitive substitution of harmony for discord.

13. We may, however, and, according to many thinkers, we must, go beyond this point of view. We may find in metaphysical speculation or in the transcendental world which it reveals to us an answer to the doubt and a solution of the discord. Here, indeed, I might stop; for I started at the outset with a disavowal of any desire to go beyond the scientific boundary. I should have to conclude by challenging the metaphysician to dispute the truth of my conclusions, and should urge that they would have to be recognised upon any metaphysical theory, although different schools would interpret them in different ways. And I might further decline to follow the metaphysician into his own ground. This, I might say, is the meaning to be attached to morality so long as we remain in the world of experience; and if, in the transcendental world, you can find a deeper foundation for morality, that does not concern me. I am content to build upon the solid earth. You may, if you please, go down to the elephant or the tortoise. I think it better, however, to indicate my own view in the briefest way possible. For,

in the first place, many thinkers consider that it is necessary to begin at the very beginning; and to solve the whole problem of the universe before they get down to morality. A discussion which does not try to settle the issues between materialism and idealism, and between theism, pantheism, and atheism, and investigate the nature of the ego, is from their point of view simply frivolous. It touches the barest outside of the question. And, in the next place, I feel that I may be accused of unfair reticence; unless I proceed further, my antagonists will hold that my dismissal of certain problems to the metaphysician is a juggle, and that my real meaning is that the problems in question are barren logomachies, which may be left to the manufacturers of intellectual cobwebs for their amusement, but not for the instruction of mankind. In which, indeed, there seems to me to be a great deal of truth; only I do not wish to conceal my opinions, so far as I have any settled opinions.

14. To give a satisfactory answer, I should have to write a metaphysical treatise; for without such a discussion I could not define accurately the boundaries between metaphysics and science. And I must add, that one difficulty which I feel is that my own mind is not as clear as I could wish upon these questions. I can, however—or so I hope—indicate briefly certain crucial points. And first of all, I will say that I utterly disbelieve in any so-called ontology. I regard it as a barren region haunted by shadowy chimeras, mere spectres, which have not life enough in them even to be wrong, non-entities veiled under dexterously woven masses of verbiage. I don't believe that anyone can, by any device whatever, spin out of his own mind a demonstration of the ultimate nature of things in general; and that is what the ontologist substantially tries to do. The direct arguments against such systems are not more conclusive than the futility of the supposed conclusions. The ontologist proves something with infinite display of logic; and if you admit it to be proved, you find that the admission leaves you exactly where you were before. And if this has an arrogant sound, I can only say that it is the only conclusion compatible with a due respect

for philosophers. For when I look at the vast systems set forth and supported by arguments devised by the most famous thinkers, and consider their instability, their helpless incapacity to withstand assaults or to solve real difficulties, I can only infer either that their authors were fools—which would be the height of arrogance—or that they were attempting problems beyond the reach of reason. The greatest athlete cannot get off his own shadow.

15. The desired consummation of some approximation to unity is, therefore, as I hold, to be sought by distinguishing the metaphysical from the scientific problem. Ethical investigations, like others, will have some definite results when we turn to what are called historical methods of inquiry. This is true, I think, of the allied inquiries into social, and political, and æsthetic inquiry. The tendency of modern speculation to take that form, and to look into the history of the past for an answer to problems which were once attacked by looking simply into our own minds, implies a recognition of this principle. And I believe that we may look for some approximation to agreement as the method is more generally adopted and more systematically carried out. I need not dwell upon the nature of the advantage thus gained. It is enough to say that when we cease to ask 'What is the beautiful or the moral?' and ask 'What have men actually admired?' we get rid of the many illusions generated by mistaking our own special tastes for universal tastes; that we take into account that 'social factor,' without a recognition of which no tenable theory can be put together, and that we have an advantage comparable to that gained when we see a large arc of a curve instead of the infinitesimal fraction perceptible at a given moment. To this it is often replied that an account of how things come to be is after all radically different from an account of what they are. I do not quite admit the radical difference, for I think that the true nature of a thing may reveal itself only when we see it on a large scale. But I admit that there is something more to be done, and that, after all that can be said by the man of science, we must still come upon the old metaphysical

problems. In what form, then, do they enter our investigation?

16. When we have taken leave of ontology, is there anything left for the metaphysician? Metaphysics has been described as a theory of knowledge, a systematic account of all that can be said about knowledge as knowledge. This must not be understood as though we could explain what is meant by knowledge in terms of something different from knowledge. To attempt to give an answer of that kind would be to attempt to get outside ourselves, and to fall into the sham philosophy of the ontologists. We may still, it is said, be able to understand the intimate nature of knowledge, to regard it as a vast process in which every particular department is organically connected with the rest, as the special manifestation of some universal principles. To try to define this vague suggestion would be to discuss the most thorny metaphysical problems. It is enough in this place if I endeavour to suggest certain conclusions. It is much easier to say what metaphysics are not than to say what they are. And I say, in the first place, that though it may be conceivably possible to exhibit the most general forms of knowledge and understand their relations, no such theory would enable us to get from theory of knowledge to theory of facts. We may twist and turn as long as we please, but the theory of knowledge will not in the least help us to discover the actual constitution of the world. We cannot make the slightest approach to explaining why human beings should be constituted as they are, why they should have such and such senses and faculties, and no more, or why matter should be distributed in the actual combinations; and therefore, as it seems to me, wherever there is a question of facts, we must find some ground of knowledge outside of metaphysical inquiries. And if, in the next place, we ask What can metaphysics do for us? I can only reply indirectly: A man is a sound reasoner when his thoughts accurately reflect the external world. And this, as we come to see, implies not merely correct performance of logical operations, but the elimination of certain fundamental illusions generated in

earlier stages of thought. Sound metaphysics consist, in Berkeley's phrase, in the laying of the dust which we have ourselves raised in the removal of certain scaffoldings which have been useful in the building up of the edifice, and the perception that they are not essential parts of the structure; briefly in becoming distinctly conscious of our own mental operations, and therefore destroying fallacies which lie at the base of all logical procedure. If this be anything like the accurate statement—and I can only speak in the roughest way—we may say that metaphysical inquiry is of the highest importance in this sense, that our reasoning cannot be thoroughly sound unless we are sound metaphysicians, but that we must not expect from metaphysics any system of definite statement of fact. And further, we must infer that legitimate metaphysical investigations affect knowledge in general, but have no special relation to any particular department of knowledge.

17. My view, therefore, is that the science of ethics deals with realities; that metaphysical speculation does not help us to ascertain the relevant facts; and, therefore, that it has no more relation to ethical science than to any other branch of knowledge. Our statement of the facts will be modified as our metaphysical creed changes; the approximation to precise and lasting truth will be made closer, and, so far, the science of ethics will be improved by metaphysical progress. But ethical principles are only affected as the principles of all other sciences are affected. Though I cannot offer any proof of this doctrine, I shall try briefly to show how it bears upon certain cardinal points; and why, in my opinion, it is useless to look for any further light from metaphysical inquiries. This is virtually to challenge the metaphysician to show that he is of any use in the matter.

18. The first principle which I have sought to establish is, briefly, that a moral rule is a statement of a condition of social welfare. Intemperance, according to me, is proved to be immoral by the same methods which prove it to be unwholesome. Scientific observation shows that it is productive of diseased states either of the individual or of society. In great

part the arguments are identical, and though the moralist has to go into questions not considered by the physiologist, he still uses the same methods. Moreover, it is by scientific observation alone that the facts can be proved; for by the purely metaphysical method you cannot even approach the relevant questions, or prove even the advantages of drinking, much less of moderate drinking. What is true in this case is true, according to me, of all moral problems. They can only be examined when we have some knowledge of the organisation of man and of society which is unattainable by any other than the scientific method. And I have further urged that moral systems have actually grown up through a recognition, more or less explicit, of these truths. Morality has been regarded as imposed by the will of a deity; but then it is taken to be the will of a good deity; that is, of a deity who wishes well to mankind. From the purely utilitarian point of view, it is regarded as a statement of the conditions of happiness; but the happiness is that of beings whose character is already determined at all points by their being part of the social organism, and the sentiment can only become part of the social instinct when it is purified from any individual aberration.

19. If this, which it has been my purpose to prove, be admitted, what is the relation of the ethical to the metaphysical theory? The metaphysician, as I take it, has a *locus standi* only so far as he can throw light upon the general conditions of belief, or, again, upon the nature of certain ultimate distinctions, such as that of object and subject, taken for granted in the scientific statement. The ontologist, indeed, and the theologian claim to do more; for ontology, as I believe, is but the spectre of theology, the *caput mortuum* to which it is reduced when the attempt is made to purify it from all sensuous and anthropomorphic elements. But what more is required? If you assert that morality does not coincide with the conditions of social welfare, you have not only to meet the direct arguments alleged in favour of the identity, but to give some other criterion of morality. If, for example, the criterion be conformity to the will of a deity who commands men to transgress the conditions of social welfare, we

have to meet the reply that the deity is malevolent and commands a false morality, or rather imposes an immoral rule. Even the most ascetic system, according to me, carries with it a tacit reference to social welfare, and the deviations are due to errors of judgment as to the facts. In any case, if the criterion be rejected, morality is arbitrary until some further criterion be suggested. The impossibility of any such attempt is so clear, that it may be almost taken for granted that the coincidence between morality and the conditions of social welfare is admitted. But if so, the rule is given by the conditions. If it be admitted that this coincidence exists in fact; if, again, it be admitted that the social utility of certain kinds of conduct and character can be proved, and that, if proved, they become for that reason 'right' and 'virtuous,' then it seems to follow that the moral law is actually established in the way suggested—namely, by observation of the facts. You may perhaps prove that the deity approves obedience to the law thus established; but for the mere fact of ascertaining the law, the observation is the sole and sufficient method. Nor can you know that the deity approves otherwise than by knowing that he is good—that is, desires the welfare of mankind.

20. The same arguments take a different form in the case of metaphysical discussion. The ontologist insists that morality cannot be established until 'materialism' be confuted. To this I should answer, that for scientific purposes the discussion is irrelevant. I can prove that unselfishness and all the qualities which require intellectual development are essential conditions of social welfare. If the materialist can prove that the emotions and the intellect are in some sense mere dances of atoms, I can only reply that in that case atoms have more in them than I should have supposed, but that the phenomena which I take into account remain the same. And meanwhile, from the scientific point of view, I can obtain a solution of the real problem, which the ontologist cannot approach. For as the organism has both physical appetites and intellectual emotions, and as the conditions of social welfare require a certain balance between the

faculties, and not the abolition of either class of faculties, the study of those conditions gives a measure of the degree in which the intellect should be developed; so far, namely, as is consistent with the health of the whole organism; whereas any absolute conclusion as to the merit of intellectual and physical parts of our nature abstractedly from the conditions of life, would be futile because absolute. The metaphysician, however, more frequently takes a position corresponding to that of the theologian who allows the coincidence between morality and social welfare, and only disputes as to the mode of proof. The metaphysician distinguishes between the form and the contents of duty. He does not deny that in any special case we must discover what is right by observing the facts, and that the fact that a given action will make men happier is so far a proof that it is a right action; but he argues that the conception of 'duty,' of 'ought,' or of 'right and wrong,' must be independently obtainable. The question, which involves the basis of a whole metaphysical system, cannot be adequately argued here. But I may answer briefly, first, that even upon this assumption, the science, if there be a science, of the conditions of social welfare must be of essential importance to morality; for, if it leads to any conclusions, those conclusions will immediately determine the morality of some classes of conduct. If I can prove drunkenness to be socially mischievous, I shall certainly prove it to be wicked. The blank concept 'right and wrong' will be of no use till I can provide it with contents upon which to operate; and therefore the science of ethics will still be of paramount importance if it can be established. And, secondly, I answer that, upon my showing, this is really a perversion of a plain principle. In the metaphysical region you may come across ultimate canons of truth, but by no conceivable ingenuity upon principles of action. And, in fact, we find accordingly that thinkers who accept this position have to make the most desperate efforts to twist the 'ought' out of the 'is.' The ultimate principles which they propose are simply logical principles in a thin disguise. So, for example, the famous

theorem that you are to act so that your rule of conduct may be a rule for all men is a transfigured bit of logic. To think so that my thoughts may be true for everybody, is perhaps a description of thinking that is objectively true. But, as I have already argued, the theorem as stated is strictly true of all conduct whatever. I cannot help acting in the way in which everyone would act with my character and under the same circumstances; nor, upon my showing, has this proposition more to do with moral conduct than with any other kind of conduct; nor has it more to do with the narrowest and most prudential than with the most sympathetic and self-sacrificing principles. And this is only what we must expect, if, in fact, metaphysical inquiry has, as I maintain, no special relation to ethics, and can only be forced into relation with it by ingenious sophistry.

21. Let us pass to the next head under which I have considered morality. It is argued that without some transcendental principle there is no adequate foundation for morality; and this, not in the sense just considered, that the moral law remains indeterminate, but in the sense of our having no security for its permanence. I have already explained at full length my own theory. Morality, I have said, is a product of the social factor; the individual is moralised through his identification with the social organism; the conditions, therefore, of the security of morality are the conditions of the persistence of society; and if we ask from the scientific point of view what these conditions are, we can only reply by stating that the race is dependent upon the environment; by tracing, so far as we are able, the conditions under which it has been developed, and trying to foresee the future from the past. We may, again, appeal to the metaphysician if we want to examine into the validity and the various implications of the ultimate principles involved in our argument. Only from science, if from science, can we learn anything, however trifling, as to the order of actual existence in the present or the future. Our hopes and our fears must be alike based upon our experience, and upon nothing else. The theologian who pronounces this procedure to be insuffi-

cient has to meet the difficulty after his own fashion. We can only feel confidence in the existence of that which rests upon a transcendental basis. Morality has a precarious position, therefore, unless we believe in a moral governor of the universe. But here immediately arise the whole array of insuperable difficulties over which theologians have vainly struggled since theology existed. It is enough to hint at them. What is a moral governor? A governor who makes his subjects moral? No, for many men are wicked. Could he prevent their being wicked? If he could and did not, we have no security for his willing them to be moral. If he did not because he could not, his willing them to be moral will not secure the existence of morality. He can, however, secure the punishment of the wicked; and therefore, if moral government does not mean the immediate morality of the universe, it means the ultimate rule of justice. What, then, is justice? It means, in brief, that punishment should be impartial, and should be proportioned to the offence. Now, if the wicked are to be punished impartially they must be punished in proportion to their wickedness; that is, for the wickedness due to their own character, not to the accidental circumstances. But their own character means their innate qualities, that is, the qualities with which they were created; or, in other words, the Creator as governor punishes them exactly for being what he made them. Again, the punishment is 'proportioned' to the offence. How is the proportion to be determined? Surely the perfection of human justice is measured by its efficiency. That system is best which most diminishes crime. But if we apply this rule to divine justice we get into hopeless difficulties. We must suppose that the Creator wishes to diminish wickedness as much as possible, for otherwise he would inflict useless suffering. Yet we have to suppose that he inflicts punishments —infinite and eternal, according to the most logical theologians —in such a way that the reforming influence is a minimum and the suffering a maximum. If a human ruler admitted that the punishments inflicted by his laws had very little deterrent effect, but argued as a set-off that he kept the

greatest part of his subjects in perpetual confinement and incessant torture, we should certainly say that, whether by his misfortune or fault, he had a very ill-regulated kingdom. Yet, when we try to reconcile ourselves to the existing evils by assuming the existence of this supernatural balance, we necessarily present the universe after this fashion. Whether it is an edifying theory or not I cannot say. I do not see how it helps to strengthen our belief in the safeguards of morality. The explanation is simple enough. The world is what we see it, abounding in misery and wickedness. If you believe in a moral governor, you are bound to put extraordinary limitations upon his power to vindicate his benevolence, or to limit his benevolence in order to vindicate his power; and, in either case, you take away with one hand that safeguard to morality which you give with the other. Meanwhile, in any case, you have to stop all logical gaps by talking about mystery. It is simpler to admit that the whole is a mystery, and to cease the effort to pay ourselves with words.

22. The ontologist sees the weakness of the theological argument and tries to remedy it. The puzzle is that virtue may be painful and vice pleasant. You cannot really get rid of this difficulty by adding extrinsic considerations, by assuming that virtue will always meet with a reward either from man or God, and so the initial error be made up by a subsequent compensation. The hypothesis cannot be made to work, and makes a fresh breach with every attempted repair. The ontologist therefore cuts at the very root of the difficulty, not by saying that the balance will be redressed, or by admitting the mystery—for to him there is no mystery—but by boldly asserting that evil is merely a negative term, a privation, not a positive existence, or, in short, that in some way or other it does not exist at all. If it is any satisfaction to anybody to repeat such phrases, it would be a pity to deprive them of it.

23. I come to the final question about morality, and the most difficult. Must we not go to transcendental considerations in order to find a sufficient motive for moral conduct? This brings us back to the previous argument. To say what morality is—I repeat the statement once more—is by no

means the same thing as to enforce morality. It is not when one is approaching the last page of an ethical essay that one can have any illusions upon that point. Undoubtedly a man may have very clear conceptions about the nature of morality, and yet may receive from that circumstance a very slight impulse towards being himself moral. Beyond the science, I have said, lies the art; when we have admitted the truth, it has still to become an operative influence in moulding our characters. The abstract formula may be admitted without producing any vivid representation of concrete facts; the imagination has to be stimulated as well as the intellect to be convinced; and there is still much to be done before the character is moulded, so that the actual impulse shall in each case represent the general principle. A man may be forced to comply with external morality by some appeal to extrinsic motives; but to make him really moral we must stimulate the intrinsic motives; and this must be in all cases the product of the pressure put upon him in gradually imbibing the principles developed by the social factor. This is recognised in the statement that a religion is always more than a morality. It is not a mere statement that certain rules of conduct are desirable, but it is such an embodiment of some theory of the universe as may impress the imagination and govern the emotions.

24. Here, in fact, arises a vast problem or series of problems at which only the briefest glance is possible. The relation between morality and religion suggests at once whole libraries of controversy and lifetimes of investigation. A religion implies a theory of the universe. It rests upon some doctrine as to the ultimate facts ascertainable about human life and the world in which we live; and therefore, of course, every moral theory is based upon, or at least closely implicated in, the religious doctrines of the persons who hold it. Whatever is meant by 'best,' we can only say what is best for man as man by considering him as part of the general system. But many relations are equally possible. The theory, for example, that the universe is governed by some inscrutable and invisible power may be worked out with little reference

to morality; the gods may be conceived as indifferent to moral considerations, and when a moral system is evolved they may take up very different attitudes in regard to it; whilst, again, in some systems the supreme power may be regarded as essentially moral, and perhaps as revealed to us through the conscience. In any case, where there is a philosophical religion the ethical doctrine will doubtless be vitally connected with the religious, and will be stated partly in religious language; and therefore every great religious crisis has a moral reaction. Sometimes it is due to a moral revolt: the gods are opposed to the interests of morality, and are punished by being abolished. In other cases, they may be on the side of morality, and a disbelief in their existence, due to some other cause, may weaken the respect entertained for the moral rule. To examine into the complex processes of thought and feeling thus set up must always be a task of immense difficulty. I only hint at such questions to draw one conclusion. A religion, so far as it is moral (for, of course, many religions have a very questionable relation to morality), must act by stimulating the intrinsic motives to morality. Further, it can act only through the genuine belief which it embodies; and thus when we wish to estimate the effect of a religion upon morality, we come at once to a further problem.

25. In what sense, we have to ask, is a belief the ultimate condition of conduct? We may, as it is easy to see, fall into great difficulties, unless we can say also what governs the belief. So long, indeed, as a man has a certain belief, we may say that it does not matter what was the origin of the belief, nor whether it were true or false. A man will refrain from conduct if he fears to be punished, whether the punishment dreaded is to come from a real or an imaginary being. The fear of hell, so long as people believe in hell, may be a genuine restraint just as much as the fear of the gallows. But there is an obvious difference between the cases. The fear of a real enemy may be due to actual experience. We explain the belief sufficiently by supposing the enemy to exist and to be perceived. But when we have to deal with the imaginary enemy, we have always a possible

explanation of a different kind. There must have been some cause for the imagination; and that cause may be something which is not removed, and which is still operative when the existence of the imaginary enemy is disproved. If the fear of the enemy be the sole cause of abstinence from the conduct, the conduct will cease to be disagreeable when the enemy is no longer feared. But the case may be entirely different. Perhaps the conduct was found to produce disagreeable consequences; they were erroneously explained as due to the hostility of an imaginary being; and though the being is proved not to exist, the same consequences will result, and will, as soon as recognised, still dictate abstinence from the conduct.

26. This, of course, applies to the case of so-called religious sanctions. Is the dread of hell the cause of abstinence from vice? It may no doubt be the immediate cause for the individual. If a man believe that drunkards will be damned, that is for him a sufficient cause for abstaining; and if you prove to him that hell is a fiction, he may become a drunkard. But this is an obviously inadequate account of the whole phenomenon. If this belief in hell were the result of scientific inquiry, if the tendency of drunkenness to produce damnation were proved like its tendency to produce delirium tremens, the explanation would be sufficient. We should say simply that the existence of a known place of torment was one of the causes which limited drunkenness. But if hell be an imaginary place we must necessarily go further. People are afraid of being damned for drunkenness, and therefore they do not drink. But why do they anticipate damnation as a consequence of drunkenness? Obviously they must think it hateful for some independent reason. They think that drunkards will be damned because they think drunkenness hateful; or at any rate, the belief in the damnation of drunkards has arisen from a perception of its other evil consequences. The supposed ultimate ground, therefore, of the dislike is itself a corollary from the dislike. We must distinguish between the social and the individual creed. A given person may be influenced solely by the belief which he has accepted from his neighbours, whether it be true or false.

But the belief has been developed in the society from a perception of the evil, and is a product of that perception, not the determining cause.

27. Thus the true statement of the case will be, upon my theory, that the limiting and determining cause of the moral objection to vice is in all cases measured by the perception of the social evils which it causes. Whilst the society is permeated by a belief in the supernatural, this perception has to express itself in terms of the supernatural sanction; and to a man who is a member of such a society, who really explains the phenomena in general as significant of the action of a supernatural being, it is the same thing to say that conduct is harmless, and to say that it is not punished supernaturally. But as the belief in such interference decays, the perception of the pernicious consequences which expressed itself in terms of hell may use a different language without being therefore less efficacious. The motive alleged in the old dialect was nominally indeed of infinite weight, but the effect upon conduct was entirely disproportionate, because, in the first place, it did not correspond to a genuine belief, and, in the second place, the imaginary penalty would always be supposed capable of evasion by imaginary remedies. The difference upon this showing is not in the strength of the motive, but in the dialect which has to be used to accommodate it to the prevailing system of belief. The ethical sentiment becomes, however, stable and demonstrable when that which is the real cause of its development is recognised as being also its sufficient reason, and when people find in the various motives which command a conformity to the social interest a sufficient ground of conduct.

28. I cannot expand this further at present. I conclude by one remark which it suggests, and which seems to require explicit statement. It is sometimes said that science cannot provide a new basis of morality; and this is urged as though it were an objection. I at least must thoroughly accept the statement. What science proves, according to me, is precisely that the only basis of morality is the old basis; it shows that one and the same principle has always determined

the development of morality, although it has been stated in different phraseology. And, moreover, this principle is not the suggestion of any end distinct from all others. The great forces which govern human conduct are the same that they always have been and always will be. The dread of hunger, thirst, and cold; the desire to gratify the passions; the love of wife and child or friend; sympathy with the sufferings of our neighbours; resentment of injury inflicted upon ourselves —these and such as these are the great forces which govern mankind. When a moralist tries to assign anything else as an ultimate motive, he is getting beyond the world of realities. If a theologian tells me to love my mother because God commands me to love her, he is inverting the true order of thought. My love of those who are nearest to my sympathies must be the ultimate ground of any love that I can have for anybody else. My desire for the welfare of my race grows out of my desire for the welfare of my own intimates; and that exists independently of any ethical theory whatever. A theological basis of morality is conceivable so far as the supreme being is represented as knowable and lovable; but to order morality in the name of logical consistency is reasonable only when I can stir men's blood by assuming that two and two make four. On my theory, then, the moralist assigns no new motives; he accepts human nature as it is, and he tries to show how it may maintain and improve the advantages already acquired. His influence is little enough; but, such as it is, it depends upon the fact that a certain harmony has already come into existence; and that men are therefore so constituted that they desire a more thorough solution of existing discords. A sound moral system is desirable in order to give greater definiteness to the aims and methods; and it is doubtless important to obtain one in a period of rapid decay of old systems. But it is happy for the world that moral progress has not to wait till an unimpeachable system of ethics has been elaborated.

THE END.

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